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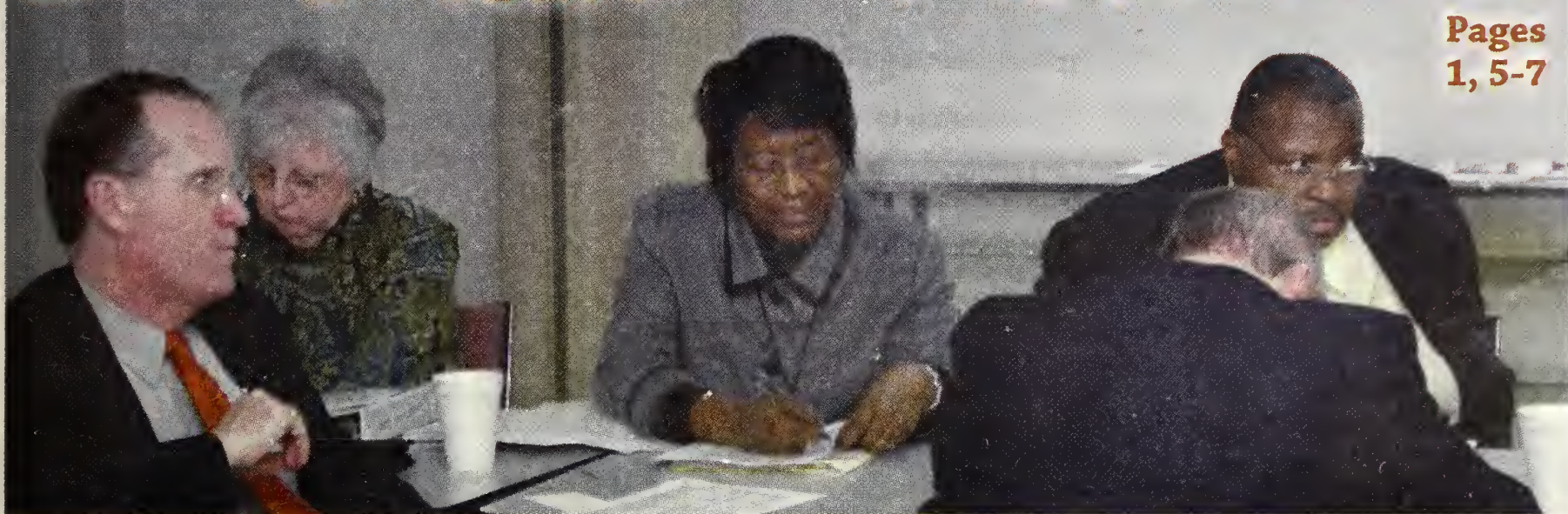


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# Charting a course along the 7 Pathways

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Conference Connectional Table members Tom Greener, Ann Davis, Bernice Johnson, and Eldrick Davis listen to a presentation during the meeting. Photo by Bill Norton.

## CCT helps conference stay on course, hears proposal to change retirees' insurance coverage, reviews conference budget

By Bill Norton \*

The Conference Connectional Table (CCT), meeting on Nov. 26, heard Bishop Al Gwinn say their duties included helping the Conference stay on course, received a preliminary report about insurance coverage for retirees, heard about ministry in a small church, and reviewed an initial report on the

budget for action by the 2008 Annual Conference.

This body "must be an automatic pilot for our Conference that reminds the pilots if they are off course," Bishop Gwinn said to the CCT. "We should take God's fresh vision and adjust what we are doing to fit that vision."

"Our main business is to love God with all our heart, mind and strength. As this relates to our Annual Conference, our business is to empower others. We empower a local congregation to be healthy, and we empower effective 21st century leaders for the local church," added Gwinn.

He said the conference budget was aligning more to empower local churches. The CCT team should strategize "on how we connect in relationship with one another and to constantly examine current practices for validity," he said.

### Clergy health insurance

The Table was introduced to a proposal from the Conference Task Force on Retirement Health Care Liability, established jointly between the Board of Pensions and the Insurance Committee. The task force's assignment

was to devise ways to both ensure the long-term viability of the conference retiree insurance program and to contain that program's costs.

"Though some conferences have eliminated them, the NC Conference should continue to provide health benefits for retirees," said the Rev. Gray Southern, speaking for the task force to the CCT. In addition to being on the task force, he is chair of the Insurance Committee.

The presentation by Southern indicated that the task force will be recommending to the 2008 Annual Conference that tenure in the conference should be rewarded and that pastors retiring before Medicare eligibility should pay more for the conference insurance.

Currently the conference has an accumulated health care liability of

See "CCT," page 7

## Fruitful congregations engage in five practices

By Linda Green \*

UMNS — Radical hospitality means more than treating people well when they walk through the church doors, said Bishop Robert Schnase to participants in a convocation of United Methodist bishops and their extended cabinets.

Such hospitality offers people the embrace of Christ, is rooted in Scripture, welcomes the stranger and "is about congregations that have as much passion, desire and care for those who are not a part of the congregation as they do for those already a part of the congregation."

Schnase told nearly 1,000 participants at the Nov. 9-11 event that congregations desiring to be effective and fruitful in ministry should engage in five core practices, which he also outlined in *Five Practices of Fruitful*

See "Fruitful congregations," page 6



## SEJ Connectional Table finalizes report, completes campaign

Two milestone celebrations marked the meeting of the Southeastern Jurisdiction (SEJ) Connectional Table on Nov. 16 – 18 at Lake Junaluska. The Connectional Table finalized their report for the upcoming Jurisdictional Conference, and Lake Junaluska celebrated the end of a 10 million dollar capital campaign started in 2002.

The SEJ Connectional Table held their 19th meeting and produced a proposal to encourage a more effective ministry of The United Methodist Church in the Southeastern Jurisdiction.

### To three agencies

The most recent report from the Connectional Table's transition team to the 2008 Jurisdictional Conference is much different from the proposed plan from one year ago.

In the new report to the Conference will include three agencies (Lake Junaluska Assembly, Gulfside Assembly and Hinton Rural Life Center) instead of the current seven.

The Intentional Growth Center (IGC), SEMAR, UVMIM and SEJANAM will be independent entities under the SEJ Committee on Coordination and Accountability.

Groups such as Ministries with Young People, the Commission on Archives and History, Status and Role of Women and Religion and Race will report to the same committee.

### Capital campaign

A banquet during the meeting celebrated the end of the capital campaign which raised funds for projects

at Lake Junaluska from beautification of the campus to the building of the new Bethea Welcome Center. Bishop Lawrence McCleskey received an award for his service as the chair of the Campaign for Lake Junaluska.

"This is the largest comprehensive capital campaign that Lake Junaluska has ever done. The campaign allowed us to build the new Bethea Welcome Center and the new Golf Course club house," said Jimmy L. Carr, SEJ executive director.

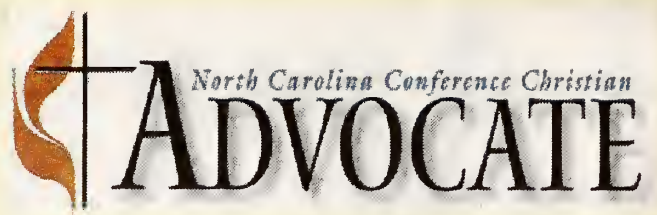
"It also allowed us to totally renovate Shackford Hall and the Wilson Children's Complex....it raised money for the endowment and to save the upper end of the Lake from sedimentation. The campaign allowed us to raise needed funds to upgrade our grounds and facilities, and it also doubled our donor base," he added.

### The next phase

The next phase of fundraising will benefit the west end of Lake Junaluska Assembly. The plan is to update the facilities close to Lake Junaluska's main entrance: apartments, the basketball gym, Jones Cafeteria, Mountain View and Sunnyside.

"We want to keep Lake Junaluska beautiful. We want to keep the front end of the campus beautiful. Our plan is to keep the west end (of the campus) open year round. We know that we can bring groups that can use these facilities," Jim Hanna, Lake Junaluska director of development and foundation said.

The next SEJ Conference is scheduled for July 16-19, 2008 at Lake Junaluska.



## February is NCCC Advocate subscription month

February is North Carolina Conference Christian Advocate subscription month.

Promotional materials, including a poster and subscription forms, have been mailed to each local church lay leader, to equip local churches in spreading the word about the Advocate.

The goal of this paper is to bring local church members, pastors, and those persons in extension ministry,

denomination news from churches, districts, the conference, and General Church agencies. The intent is for the articles and resources found in the NCC Christian Advocate to be used for teaching, preaching, and inspiration.

The staff of the Advocate appreciates your comments and suggestions in order to keep the paper a useful and informative publication.

## UM youth help hunger charities in Souper Bowl of Caring

Thousands of youth from churches across the country will join in the fight against hunger and poverty on Super Bowl Sunday, Feb. 3, 2008.

No matter the size of the youth group, churches can help provide shelter for the homeless, food to the hungry and compassion to the needy.

Churches are invited to join the Souper Bowl of Caring and share in the joy and power of serving with others around the country for a united cause.

It's as simple as holding soup pots at church doors following worship or near Super Bowl Sunday and asking



worshippers to drop in a dollar to help people who are hungry.

Churches donate 100% of their collection to the charity of their choice.

In 2007, over 14,000 youth groups participated, generating over \$8 million for charities across the country.

The 2,753 United Methodist congregations which took part in the effort raised more than \$950,000.

Register at [www.souperbowl.org](http://www.souperbowl.org) and receive a resource kit.

After donations are collected on Feb. 3, report collections back through the web site.

## Methodist Home for Children

### Sunday

We invite your congregation to support  
Methodist Home for Children on  
February 17, 2008.

Your contribution will help clothe, feed, and provide for children in MHC's care. Your gift will also help support MHC's foster and adoptive parents who offer safe, loving homes for children across North Carolina.

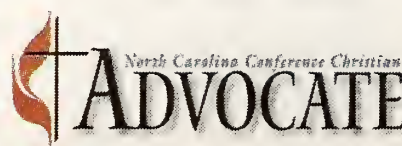
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In service to God, Methodist Home for Children builds on the social, physical, emotional, and spiritual strengths of children, youth, and families, and affirms their worth.



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All articles and photos subject to editing. Photographs or art should be submitted at 300dpi or higher in JPG or TIF formats.

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# Nothing But Nets distributes 133,000 nets to families in Mali; all children under 5 to be covered

The people of The United Methodist Church and Nothing But Nets—a global, grassroots campaign to prevent malaria—recently sent the Rev. Gary Henderson, executive director of the Global Health Initiative, to Mali, Africa as part of a United Nations Foundation and Nothing But Nets delegation to observe the distribution of over two million long-lasting insecticide-treated bed nets to children and their families.

Nothing But Nets campaign supporters funded 133,000 of the bed nets distributed December 13-19, 2007 as part of the largest integrated health campaign in Mali, where malaria is a leading cause of death for children under five.

Through the integrated health campaign, all children under five will be protected by an insecticide-treated net.

"We've seen such support and generosity for this campaign from United Methodist congregations, youth groups and individuals. To be able to see the end result—distributing nets to families at risk—is extremely gratifying," said Henderson.

"Observing the cooperative efforts of all of the organizations involved in the health campaign to bring better health to children in Mali is also helpful as we seek to build on the denomination's long standing focus on health ministries and to expand those efforts," he said.

The integrated health campaign was organized and implemented by the Malian Ministry of Health, in collaboration with Measles Initiative and other international partners.

As part of this integrated health campaign, over 2.8 million children under the age of five will also receive vaccinations against polio and measles, Vitamin A supplementation and de-worming medication.

In Mali, Henderson and Nothing But Nets representatives participated in a faith leader's event gathering both local and international leaders of faith

together to discuss ways to address global health problems.

In his blog journal featured on the [www.nothingbutnets.org](http://www.nothingbutnets.org) web site, Henderson wrote: "We had difficulty concluding our conversations at table because they were quite lively and animated. Overall, I sensed that the participants found value and meaning in the interchange. As I listened to the Muslim and Christians members of the Malian community I could tell that this work together, related to child health, had served to strengthen their ties and relationships. I listened carefully to the theme of tolerance they stressed as they forged ahead in their work. It seems to me that they have discovered something beautiful in this process of shared work. I could hear the scriptural admonition in my spirit 'to come and reason together.'"

The United Methodist Church is engaged in a new global health initiative aimed at combating the diseases of poverty and bringing better health to people all over the world.

Every 30 seconds, an African child dies from a malaria infection transmitted by a mosquito bite, and every day 25 million pregnant African women risk severe illness and harm to their unborn children from a malaria infection.

However, insecticide-treated nets, like the ones purchased through Nothing But Nets can protect a family of four against malaria for up to four years.

Nothing But Nets, a project of the United Nations Foundation, is a global, grassroots campaign to save lives by delivering long-lasting, insecticide-treated bed nets to those most in need.

A \$10 donation covers the cost to purchase and distribute a bed net and educate the recipient on its proper use.

The Campaign has engaged more than 60,000 individuals, raised more than \$16 million and will have distributed more than 700,000 nets by the end of 2007.

## The women of "Wassa"

By Ruth Riley \*

Every Wednesday since 2004, in the village of Konodimini, Mali, a group of women called Wassa (which translates to "satisfaction") gathers together to discuss the health of their community and

the micro-economic system that they established. The system works as follows: All of the women pool their money together representing the group savings. Women are allowed to take interest free loans for up to three months if there is a family emergency or their child must go to the doctor. These women are also allowed to take out a one month loan with interest if they desire to start a small business, which often entails selling grain or some other agricultural-based product. None of these women have an MBA in economics or probably even have an education greater than primary school, yet they have revolutionary insight and leadership skills that transcend the dirt huts in which they live.

When the Nothing But Nets group visited the Wassa group's village, the women first performed a beautiful ceremonial dance. We then sat in a circle and listened to not only the details of their economic system, but also about their involvement with the integrated health campaign. These women went around at 5:00 AM to make sure that all of the women in the village were not only aware of the Nothing But Nets campaign but would be participating.

\* Ruth Riley traveled to Mali as a WNBA representative and wrote this blog entry for [www.nothingbutnets.org](http://www.nothingbutnets.org).



## Nominations now being requested for NC Conference committees

Every pastor and member of a United Methodist congregation in the North Carolina Conference is invited to prayerfully consider persons, themselves included, who might effectively serve as a member of a conference committee, board or agency.

A listing will be available on the conference web site, [www.nccumc.org](http://www.nccumc.org), in early January 2008. On the listing will be the nominees needed for each conference committee, board, or agency. A form will also be available to be completed by each person willing to serve.

Nominations will be received through March 21, 2008.

## Ben

Hometown: Oak Island, N.C.

Ben Roberts is holding that cross for many reasons. Greensboro College has been a College of the Church since her founding in 1838, and even though you do not have to be Methodist to be a student or to work here, we do have a beautiful chapel on campus that is under the direction of a Methodist minister ... and an assistant. Meet Ben, the assistant to the minister of the college.

Ben knows some things about ministry, in that his father is a Methodist pastor in Oak Island, N.C. Ben is determined that he will go to divinity school after he graduates from Greensboro College.

As the assistant to the minister, Ben — a religious studies major — assists with the weekly services and with all kinds of religious life activities.

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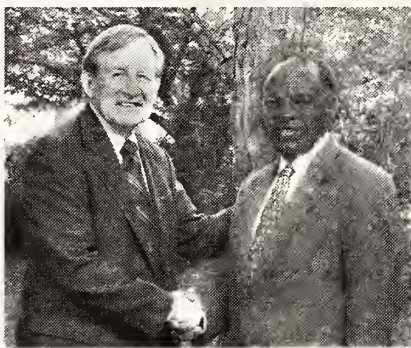


# Mack Parker elected next chair of UMRH board

Mack B. Parker of Raleigh has been elected chair of the United Methodist Retirement Home's Board of Trustees. The election was effective Nov. 1.

Parker succeeded Dr. Brian G. Gentle, retired conference clergy, who completed two consecutive terms as chair.

Parker, immediate past president of Conference United Methodist Men and an active member of North Raleigh UMC, has served as a member of the



Dr. Brian Gentle (left) congratulates Mack B. Parker on his election as chair of the UMRH Board of Trustees.

UMRH board since 2002, serving most frequently as second vice-chair.

He formerly chaired the admissions committee and served as a member of the executive committee, the audit committee and is a member of the UMRH Foundation.

"I am delighted and honored that the Board of Trustees has chosen me to serve as their new chairman. The United Methodist Retirement Homes has a ministry of care and a mission of serving all seniors with dignity and respect, and I will carry this forward

during my term," said Parker.

Parker is a retirement planner in Raleigh and holds a BS degree from NC A&T in Greensboro and an MA degree in finance from the Univ. of New Haven in West Haven, CT.

Other NC Conference positions Parker has held include: past vice

president of the Council on Finance and Administration and past member of the Board of Pensions.

He served as a NC Conference delegate to the 2000 and 2004 General Conferences and will be a delegate to the 2008 General Conference to be held this spring in Fort Worth, TX.

## Knightdale UMC breaks ground

On November 18, Knightdale UMC held a special service and groundbreaking ceremony for its new facility. The service was led by the Rev. Jenny Wilson and featured a message by Bishop Al Gwinn. Several former KUMC pastors also attended.

The new facility is within the city limits and is located within a high-growth area. It is about one mile from the present location. The building on the new site will house a multi-purpose room, ample classroom space, modern kitchen and more.

All members of the church were given the opportunity to turn the earth as different classes, age groups and ministries were called upon to participate.

Over 50 custom shovels were used to mark the occasion. Soil from the four

corners of the present church grounds was mixed with the new earth.

The new church will be built on a 10-acre plot at the corner of Forestville and Old Crews Roads just off Hwy. 64.



Standing ready with their shovels: (L-R) Mark Blanton, associate pastor; Jenny Wilson, pastor; Ned Hill, Raleigh District superintendent; and Bishop Al Gwinn.

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# Charting a course along the 7 Pathways

## The Seven Pathways

The Council of Bishops identified Seven Pathways to focus on while making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

1. Transforming existing congregations  
Revelation 1-3
2. Developing new congregations  
Acts 1:8  
Acts 16:9-10
3. Strengthening clergy and lay leadership  
Philippians 3: 13-14  
2nd Timothy 2:14
4. Teaching Wesleyan model of reaching and forming disciples of Jesus Christ  
Matthew 28: 19-20
5. Reaching and transforming the lives of new generations of children  
Matthew 19:14  
Acts 2:39  
Proverbs 22:6
6. Eliminating poverty in community with the poor  
Deuteronomy 15:7  
Luke 10
7. Expanding racial / ethnic ministries  
Acts 10:28

## Individuals must change within, new way to evaluate and constant learning needed

By Bill Norton \*

Real change must begin within individuals, clergy living into the vision need a different evaluation instrument, and the Conference Connectional Table has to be constantly learning, Bishop Al Gwinn said in an interview following an event for bishops and extended cabinets at Lake Junaluska Nov. 9-11 and the CCT on Nov. 26.

"We are recognizing, as we live into the vision of effective leaders and healthy congregations, that it takes a new kind of leadership to resource the ability of people to live into those visions," Bishop Gwinn said.

"We are coming to recognize what Gil Rendle (*"Leadership Under Constraints"*) says begins at home. The change has to take place within us before it can take place out there. Part of the new light we are walking in a willingness to be recreated by God for the day in which we are living."

As the conference uses the Seven Pathways as guides to the vision changes will be needed in the way clergy are evaluated and the work of the CCT, Bishop Gwinn said.

"We are encouraging our clergy to lead with vision, to lead in team building, to lead in discipleship development of the



(Left) Emily Innes, chair of the CCT, listens to (Right) Bishop Al Gwinn talk to the CCT.

Wesleyan Way, to take a congregation's mind set to turn it from inward thinking to outward thinking, to move a church from self preservation to a mission focus, yet the evaluating systems by which we measure the ability of that clergy leader to do that is under the old paradigm," he said.

Those examples, he said, are not in the current evaluation structure. The instruments being used "do not measure development of small groups or measure the intangible such a church no longer thinking about its own

survival but thinking about really being an ambassador for Christ and reaching out into the world. It is not just about people in a specific congregation, it is what is happening in the community."

Worship attendance is a better indicator of vitality in a congregation than membership, he said. "Professions of faith are an indicator, but they don't tell us the whole story because sometimes other ground work has to happen before professions of faith can come."

Not all churches are ready for newcomers. There are some places that need to be shored up, he said.

He places three core values in the lap of the CCT and says these are also values for leaders: learning, examining what is happening, and keeping the vision on focus.

"Part of the core values of the CCT is constant learning...that's a vision for effective leaders and healthy churches...you never arrive. You have to keep learning about your society today because it is not as it was in 2000. Stephen Covey, in *"The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People,"* calls it "sharpening the saw," said Bishop Gwinn said.

The second core value the CCT is asking "how is business?" The CCT at its Nov. 26 meeting heard about ministry at Cedar Grove UMC, a small rural congregation in Orange County.

The third core value is to constantly keep the conference and its ministries in focus. "Part of that includes asking "are we financially undergirding that which moves us into more effective

## Rendle's writings on leadership support work of CCT

There are evident similarities with what the Conference Connectional Table (CCT) has been discussing over the last three years and what Gil Rendle has written in his article, "Leadership Under Constraints: What Does It Mean to be Asked for Leadership in a Managerial Institution?," said Emily Innes, conference lay leader and chair of the CCT.

The Conference Extended Cabinet was asked to read the article by Rendle, senior consultant of the Alban Institute, before a Nov. 9-11 event at Lake Junaluska.

The event was attended by 1000 bishops and extended cabinets. Rendle was a featured speaker during the weekend.

Following are excerpts from "Leadership Under Constraints" compiled by Innes.

The full document is available for download from the conference web site at: [www.nccumc.org/news-info.htm](http://www.nccumc.org/news-info.htm).

### "What does it mean to be asked for leadership in a managerial institution?"

Bishops in the United Methodist Church and the staff and leaders of their conferences are being asked to provide new direction for the denomination that wishes to steer away from trends that have dominated past decades and that are felt to have weakened the denomination. Bishops and district superintendents are being asked for leadership in a managerial system. It is a task for which the denomination has not trained its leaders. It is a task that if well done, will not be met with full appreciation but will be challenged by resistance in many quarters....

### Management seeks to answer the question:

"Are we doing things right? Leadership seeks to answer the question: "Are we doing the right things?"

### The story of the exodus...

...serves us well in this moment of denominational and congregational change. It took both Moses and Aaron to get the people through.

Moses embodied leadership. He sought out the big questions, spoke with God, and carried a vision so bright that his face shone even when he was not sure in which direction to walk.

With him was Aaron who embodied management. He organized, made judgments, and planned the next day's trip rather than the destination.

Not only were both needed, but they had to walk together closely...when too far separated, with Moses on the mountaintop and Aaron below in the valley confusion set in.

Aaron organized the people to begin making the images that were breaking the very commandments that Moses was receiving.

See "Rendle's writings," page 9

See "Change needed," page 6



# Fruitful congregations' practices continued from page 1

*Congregations*, published last spring by Abingdon Press.

In addition to offering radical hospitality, the other practices are passionate worship, intentional faith development, risk-taking mission and service, and extravagant generosity.

Held at Lake Junaluska, the convocation was the first in nearly 40 years. It was designed to help bishops and their cabinets, including lay leaders, clarify the church's purpose, mission and identity.

The bishop of the Missouri Area, Schnase told the group he is keenly aware of the negative images often generated by the United Methodist mission statement of "making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world" — images of individuals using guilt or pressure tactics to bring people to Christ.

"The United Methodist Church makes disciples through congregations," Schnase said. "It is through congregations that practice the basic elements of faith communities that go back to the second chapter of Acts."

## Practical framework

Schnase said bishops, cabinets, pastors and lay leaders must do all they can to help congregations fulfill the church's mission. The five practices offer a practical framework and a common language to help churches understand their mission and fit it into their lives in a practical way, he said.

These fundamental processes are so "critical to a congregation's mission that failure to perform them in an exemplary way results in congregational deterioration and decline," Schnase said.

By the same token, repeating and improving those practices lead congregations to health, vitality and fruitfulness.

"These words capture the core process by which God uses congregations to make disciples," Schnase writes in his book.

"Congregations offer the gracious invitation, welcome, and hospitality of Christ so that people experience a sense of belonging; God shapes souls and changes minds through worship, creating a desire to grow closer to Christ; God's Spirit nurtures people and matures faith through learning in community; with increased spiritual maturity, people discern God's call to help others through mission and service; and God inspires people to give generously of themselves so that others can receive the grace they have known."

Schnase said every group and ministry in the church should engage in radical hospitality. "Radical hospitality is about taking the second mile, going the extra step, not being pleased to just get along but offering our very best and our very

highest," he said. "Our greatest strength is that we love one another, and our lives are so interwoven that we don't know that this keeps people out and is not hospitably bringing people in."

Every church thinks they are friendly and they are — "to the people already there." But radical hospitality requires looking inward and outward. "It stretches us," he said.

## Worship, learning, service

The practice of passionate worship isn't routine and isn't a performance, he said. Its purpose is to connect people to God and deepen a relationship with God and one another. "It is worship that allows us to see the world through God's eyes. It is God's way of changing our hearts and minds," said Schnase.

While worship may take many forms, passionate worship must be authentic, engaging, inter-relational and life-changing, he added.

As worship creates a desire for more learning and growth, Schnase said the most authentic and Wesleyan component is intentional faith development. This third practice of a fruitful congregation refers to the purposeful learning in community that helps people mature in their faith and grow in their knowledge and love of God. Such opportunities include Bible studies, Sunday school, vacation Bible school and small groups.

This leads to risk-taking mission and service that make a difference in the lives of others for God's purpose, whether or not they will ever be part of the community of faith, he said.

Churches cannot be satisfied with having individuals bring canned goods to build a Thanksgiving basket and think they have fulfilled the mission of Jesus Christ. "This is something we ought to be teaching first-graders to do instead of it being the central mission of the church," Schnase said.

Risk-taking means "moving out of our comfort zones" and "doing things that we would not have ordinarily done if it had not been for our relationship with Christ," he said.

"The stretch of Christian discipleship is to take on the practices of love that move us out of our comfort zone and take us to places we would never have been if it had not been for our desire to follow Jesus Christ."

## Extravagant generosity

A maturing Christian eventually reaches a point of understanding that all of life belongs to God, leading to a desire to offer oneself "fully back" to Christ. Such is the practice of extravagant generosity, according to Schnase.

"Churches that are thriving are those that unapologetically teach, preach and

practice the tithe," he said, and they are not afraid to talk about it. These churches do not focus on the desire to receive more money but on the Christian's need to grow in the spiritual quality of generosity.

Unlike the church in Africa and the Philippines, which are growing exponentially, United Methodists in the United States are being "smothered by a consumerist, materialistic society." The practice of extravagant generosity puts God first and allows God to reshape the giver's life, he said.

During the convocation, participants demonstrated extravagant generosity by contributing \$8,824 to Nothing But Nets, the church's anti-malaria campaign.

Schnase notes that the five practices are critical to a congregation's life because they reflect the ministry of Jesus Christ. He reminded the convocation that Jesus' ministry was radical, passionate and intentional and that Jesus also was a risk-taker.

\* Linda Green is a UM News Service writer based in Nashville, Tenn.



Bishop Robert Schnase presented the five core practices of successful congregations to a convocation of United Methodist bishops and their extended cabinets. As part of the presentation, participants came to the altar to give thanks to God and brought produce symbolizing fruitful congregations. UMNS photo by Linda Green.

## Change needed from page 5

clergy and healthier congregations... are we undergirding appropriately those ministries?"

It is this core value that calls on the CCT to struggle with the various line items in the conference budget.

"We still have to tell the story seven times before it is really heard...you have to recast the vision as Rick Warren [author of *Purpose Driven Life*] would say every 51 days for it to stay alive. Telling the story has to be done but not in the same way and in the same places," he said.

The needed leadership is not easy and does not please everyone.

"When you are leading in the way you should be leading, some people will not be happy. If you are making everyone happy then you are not leading the way needed," he said. As a caution, Bishop Gwinn added that "this does not mean you should get out there and make people mad."

Bishop Gwinn said he was "excited about how the CCT and the Conference Council on Finance and Administration are making such wonderful advancements as they live into the vision through their roles and responsibilities."

He said there are strong signs that local congregations are living into the vision. "Many churches have been reporting in their Charge Conferences the advancements they are making in radical hospitality, passionate worship, spiritual formation from the cradle to the grave, and risk taking ministries and mission to the world and other churches," he said.

"A lot of our churches are concentrating on the healthy church assessment and people living into that reality. It is helping them evaluate some things they have been reluctant to talk about in their church."

Healthy congregations and effective leaders are not programs, Bishop Gwinn said. "They are directions by which we move into the vision. All leaders do not have to do the same thing. All should not lead in the same way. They should lead in the way God equipped and assigned them to lead, in touch with who they are, centered in Christ, skillfully relational with people so they can lead the congregation from this place to another place."

\* Bill Norton is Advocate editor and conference director of communications.



# CCT helps conference stay on course continued from page 1

approximately \$46 million. That amount continues to rise. One of the task force's goals is to develop a plan to control the size of the liability.

One of the proposed changes would require clergy to have 180 months (15 years) participation in the conference health insurance program to be eligible for full health care benefits in retirement.

The proposal includes a provision to allow people about to retire to come into the program without meeting this requirement, provided that they meet existing requirements, including five consecutive years in the program before the retirement date.

Full details of the proposals will be presented in district briefing sessions for Annual Conference members before the June 11-14, 2008 conference.

Southern also said the Insurance Committee will recommend a repeal of their earlier proposal requiring all churches to fund the conference health insurance program should the task force's new proposal be approved.

The group would recommend the repeal because the new recommendations accomplish the same goals of stabilizing and helping fund the group enrolled in the conference insurance program, both active and retired.

The Rev. Jim Mentzer, vice chair of the Insurance Committee and the Board of Pensions, also speaking for the task force, reminded the CCT that fully funding pensions through the Past Service Liability apportionment will not solve the issues of retired clergy support.

"I think there will be a time when we have to redirect dollars to the health care liability line items for retirees," he said.

## Ministry in a small church

The Rev. Grace Hackney, pastor of Cedar Grove UMC located in northern Orange County, said it was only through the grace of God that Cedar Grove is considered a thriving rural congregation.

In the five years that Hackney has been at Cedar Grove there have been many challenges to overcome. Seven years ago the church burned down and has been rebuilt during her tenure.

The murder of an African-American not far from the church caused racial tensions to divide the community.

Cedar Grove and area African-American congregations came together for a memorial service that was the starting point for bringing the community back together. As a result of the service, an African-American woman donated farmland as a sign of reconciliation and a community garden was begun to provide food for needy families in the area.

"We learned that 70% of people

in poverty live in rural communities," Hackney said. The garden has been a way to help those in need and bring blacks, whites, and Latinos together.

Cedar Grove has 100 persons in worship each week, either in the church, in the garden, or in homes.

They struggle with a \$120,000 budget. They also have \$90,000 in grants and gifts for the community garden.

"We have paid our apportionments every year. Last year we received \$11,000 from people outside the church. This year we are \$30,000 below budget, and we are praying about this," Hackney said.

On November 1, Cedar Grove paid off their \$2.3 million building indebtedness.

"We did not focus on the management issue, we focused on how it means to be faithful. Faithfulness is very much an economic model," Hackney said.

When the first African-American woman joined the church, some members left the church.

"We have to live as a people who believe we can break down barriers," Hackney said. Being faithful is hard she said. "Cedar Grove is in the process of empowering and building up leaders."

## Rendle presentation

CCT members viewed, by DVD, a portion of a presentation by Gil Rendle, senior consultant of the Alban Institute.

He is the author of the article, "Leadership Under Constraints: What Does It Mean to be Asked for Leadership in a Managerial Institution?"

His full presentation was delivered during a Nov. 9-11 event at Lake Junaluska to over 1000 bishops, extended cabinets, lay leaders, and others. (For more on the presentation, see "Rendle's writings," page 5.)

"Pay attention to conflict and that is what you will get. We are about the future of our church, and it won't look like the church we once were," Rendle said.

Pointing out that change must begin within individuals, "be willing to give up the things we have been taught and try new skills," he said.

"The United Methodist Church has inherited and developed a managerial system from which it now asks for clear leadership. Management and leadership address distinctly different needs of an organization. One manages the present, the other defines the future," Rendle said.

"Management seeks to answer the question: 'Are we doing things



The Rev. Grace Hackney

right? Leadership seeks to answer a very different question: 'Are we doing the right things?'"

## Budget consideration

The table reviewed budget proposals from the five circles. The Conference Council on Finance and Administration asked that total increases going to the 2008 Annual Conference be no more than 3% over the amount approved in 2007. Christine Dodson, conference treasurer, said the proposed budget from the circles showed a 2.15% increase.

Each circle presented various line items and answered questions from CCT.

An item receiving much discussion was for Clergy Counseling and Consultation Office Expenses in the amount of \$24,075. Last year CCT reduced the amount to "0," pointing out that claims could be made to Blue Cross/Blue Shield and a "co-pay" could be used as required by BCBS under the conference health insurance plan.

Following concern that the exact

amount was again in the budget, a CCT member argued that "we are investing in this twice, with BCBS and here. This is exactly where we need to bring out priorities where we are rather than going where our priorities are. Is this the best way to meet the need?"

The Table asked some Circles to do more work on several line items and return for full budget approval by the CCT early in 2008.

\* Bill Norton is Advocate editor and conference director of communications.

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By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

# February <sup>adult</sup> BIBLE STUDY

## February 3, 2008

**Text: Luke 10:1-12, 17-20**  
**"Summoned to Labor!"**

This lesson is about followers of Jesus being sent out to prepare the way for the Master's upcoming visits (Luke 10:1).

Such witnessing is not portrayed as something easy to do; rather it is as the vulnerability of "lambs in the midst of wolves" (10:3); rather it is done without a lot of back-up resources (10:4); rather, it will not be welcomed everywhere (10:10-11). These difficulties do not present a very attractive recruiting tool to gain laborers!

But as Luke tells the story, seventy persons (seventy-two?)—symbolically one for each nation of the known world—go out to do this witnessing. What struck me in reading this text is that when they got back they had success stories to tell (10:17).

It does not surprise me that God blessed their faithful witnessing; what surprises me is that they knew there had been fruit given to their faithfulness.

My own experience more often has been not knowing whether or not my efforts to represent the Lord have met with much success. Sometimes, of course, there is evidence of the fruitfulness of witnessing, but many times—most of the time?—we do not see the harvest of the seeds we have

planted. Often, our journey is more like what is described in 1 Corinthians 3:6: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth."

Jesus must have sensed that the disciples were placing too much stock on observable results. He cautions them not to rejoice so much in the fact that "the spirits submit to you" (10:20) but in the fact that "your names are written in heaven" (10:20).

Faithful discipleship is about answering the call to labor in the field (10:2), but the ultimate nature of such faithful discipleship is not in counting the results but in accepting the grace that saves.

We rejoice with the disciples when the numbers are good—membership, attendance, professions of faith, acts of justice—but such numbers do not measure our faithfulness.

Even when we do not know the harvest of our seed-planting, we rejoice that God's grace-filled hand has written our names in the registry of heaven.

### What Someone Else Has Said

*In Religion and the Solid South* (Abingdon Press), Samuel S. Hill, Jr., states: "(Many persons) perceive that a caring relationship is absolutely necessary as context for any presentation of the Gospel, and that any form of contact which is capable of consummation and cessation is far too superficial to issue in a new direction."

### Prayer

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "We hear Your call, O

God, and get a little nervous about going forth. Remind us that You are there first..."

## February 10, 2008

**Text: Luke 13:1-9**  
**"Summoned to Repent!"**

Let me be blunt: let's focus on the manure. In this week's lesson, Jesus tells a story about a man who wants a fig tree to grow. What does he propose doing to help the tree mature and produce good fruit? He will fertilize it; or, as the text says in good first-century farming jargon: "I dig around it and put manure on it" (Luke 13:8).

What needs to be applied to our spiritual lives in order for them to grow and produce fruit? What are the tools for spiritual formation?

In the Wesleyan tradition, we speak of means of grace. Means of grace are the ways that God ordinarily enriches our journey.

John Wesley said there are acts of piety (prayer, Scripture, fasting, conferencing, Lord's Supper) and acts of mercy (particularly among the poor).

These means of grace are the nourishment we need for spiritual growth. To use the biblical term, they are the manure to be placed for the fig tree.

Jesus does not give much wiggle room. Either we engage in these means of grace and bear fruit or "you can cut it down" (Luke 13:9). This lesson combines a call to repentance (13:5) with an exploration of how that repentance will express itself (13:8).

True repentance avails itself of the means of grace. True repentance explores Scripture to discern God's will; true repentance has the habit of public and private prayer and worship; true repentance comes with open hands to the Lord's Table, knowing the source of grace for living; true repentance will discipline self with fasting and restraint; true repentance will connect with others in conversation and growth; true repentance expresses itself in actions of justice and mercy, especially among the poor.

Employing these means of grace (as an act of repentance) is not done in order to win God's favor by our good works. Rather, using the means of grace is to accept God's gracious offer to nourish us, sustain us, and move us to lives of fruitfulness: manure on the fig tree.

### What Someone Else Has Said

Randy Maddox has written in *The Poor and the People Called Methodists* (ed., Richard Heitzenrater, Kingswood Books): "...What is lost is the sense that activities like ministry to and with the poor are not simply duties, they are also gracious means that God has provided to 'free' us to become progressively the kind of people that we really long to be. I suspect that ministry to and with the poor will become central to contemporary Methodist/Wesleyan practice of Christian life only as we recover this richer sense, and experience, of a means of grace."

### Prayer

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Bring grace upon us, O God, for without such bounty, we perish. Hear our prayer and see our acts of repentance..."

## February 17, 2008

**Text: Luke 14:1, 7-14**  
**"Summoned to Be Humble!"**

Have you ever stood at a door as two persons jockey for position, each one wanting to be the one who steps aside for the other to go first? "After you." "No, after you." "Age before beauty." "Pearls before swine." It gets to be amusing as each one tries to "out-humble" the other.

The thing about the kind of humility to which Jesus invites us is that it does not draw attention to itself.

There is no sense of being noticed for being humble; indeed, our Lord says that humility might not even be recognized until the day of resurrection

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See "Bible study," page 10



## Nativity scene destroyed in Greensboro

Sometime in the early hours of Dec. 8, vandals struck the campus of Greensboro College and destroyed the life-size pieces of a nativity. The 71-year-old pieces were displayed on the college campus for 17 years, a gift received from Pilot Life Insurance Company.

"It is very, very sad when people strike out against sacred symbols," said college president, Craven Williams. "This was the destruction of a set of values. It is very sad to see someone's violent response to those values."

The College quickly responded by erecting a sign on the front lawn stating "Peace on Earth." The college chaplain, the Rev. Robert Brewer, led a service of dedication for the sign on Dec. 10.

Because of the outpouring of assistance and concern, the college has established a fund to enable the building of a new display for 2008.

Gifts to the "New Nativity Fund" can be sent to Greensboro College, Attn: President Craven Williams, 815 W. Market Street, Greensboro, NC 27401.

## Rendle's writings from page 5

### What does it mean to be asked for leadership in a managerial institution?

It means that as important as Aaron and his managerial strengths were, the people could not have found the promised land with him alone.

It meant that Moses needed to listen beyond the grumbling of the people that began forty-five days into a forty-year trip.

It means giving attention to the purpose and destination—trusting in the presence of God."

## BIRTHS

Katelynn Eileen Lowery was born November 27 to Trip (Elizabeth City: Mighty Wind) and Eileen Lowery.

Kiera Loren Clarke was born to Holt (Durham: Resurrection) and Jackie Clarke on November 28.

## letters to the EDITOR

### Jesus was not a pacifist

To the Editor,

I wish to present my views, as Scripture supports, that Jesus Christ was no pacifist. The "yes, He was" group argues that because He did not make effort to stop His Crucifixion it proves He was non-retaliatory. I wonder how they correlate the passage of Jesus with the whip in the Synagogue (John 2:15; KJV). Why did He have the whip in His hand? The Book says He was righteously angry! I also wonder why they do not know of the Scriptures that tell of the God-head planning all these occurrences long before anything we know was in existence. I wonder whether some rewrite the Book to support their own views.

I've heard: "God doesn't know anymore about tomorrow than you or I do (read otherwise in Acts 2:23, 2 Tim. 1:9; Romans 16:25-26; KJV)." "All these stories are no more than the ignorance of the Israelites wanting to make their God like the gods of the pagans." How did the Church let these non-believers get into teaching/preaching positions? Some may argue that they are believers in God and in Jesus, if so I ask, from where did their new revelation come? The Bible does not support their theories (Acts 2:23; Hebrews 4:12, 13; Romans 8:29; I Cor. 3:20; all KJV). There is a quote, "Don't get so open minded that your brains fall out."

Jesus fought a battle, and He did not retaliate against His assailants because the Man had a Plan. Scripture says that "if Satan had known what he was doing, he would have never crucified the King of Glory." (I Corinthians 2:8; KJV) Why would that bother Satan? Jesus did not raise His hand to stop the Plan. He came to Earth to execute the Plan, and He out-smarted Satan. He won our release from Adam's sell-out on us. So, at Easter, when you hear the sermons about how poor Jesus didn't fight back remember, the Man had a Plan. He won!

Ramona Cook, Durham

### Letters to the editor guidelines

Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on confidentiality or

those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org).

Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

## DEATHS

DILLON, Dorothy Anita, widow of the Rev. Frederick Dillon, died November 10. A service to celebrate her life was held November 13 at Saulston UMC.

VALE, Etolia Stribling, widow of the Rev. Charles Edward Vale died November 14.

PEELE, Billy (Wilmington: Retired) died November 16. A memorial service of death and resurrection was held at Zion UMC in Leland on November 25.

MILLWOOD, Cecil Paul (Greenville: Retired) died December 6. A graveside service was held December 9 at Memorial Park Cemetery in Gainesville, GA.

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# February adult Bible study *continued from page 8*

(Luke 14:14). In fact, humility seeks no repayment (14:12). In fact, humility makes no assumptions about being honored (14:10).

Have you heard of the book *Humility and How I Obtained It*? I "googled" that title and found almost fifty references to that exact title (all fictitious, of course). We do joke about the person who is self-aware about his or her humility.

Jesus calls us to be intentional about humility (14:10, 13). As we move deeper into these days of Lent, we are reminded of our Lord's own willingness to set aside self.

Perhaps Jesus' injunction to find ways to be humble comes from his awareness of just how foreign humility is to our human nature. It is as if Jesus has said: "Do deliberate acts of humility because your normal instincts will lead away from this virtue."

Jesus warns us that we cannot take credit for humility because it does not come to us naturally. Left to our own devices, we shall take the seat at the place of honor (14:8); left to our own devices, we shall engage socially only those of our own ilk (14:12).

Humility is not so much a matter of admitting "what I worm I am" as it is a matter of lifting neighbor to a place

of honor. One is humble not when one sees self as "scum of the earth," but one is humble when one grants to others a place of hospitality and worth (14:13).

## What Someone Else Has Said

Cal and Rose Samra, editors of *Holy Humor* (Master Media), have written: "It has always intrigued us that the word 'humor' and the word 'humility' both have the same root, deriving from the Latin word *humus*, meaning 'of the earth.' Humor reminds us of our fragility, our earthiness, our dustiness, our propensity to mess things up even when we have the best of intentions, our powerlessness apart from God. Humor shows each of us how far we have fallen short of the glory of God."

## Prayer

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of power and presence, hear our prayer that You might use our weakness to magnify Your strength. Grant us the gift of humility that we might turn attention from ourselves toward You. Touch us with grace sufficient to set us free from self..."

**February 27, 2008**

**Text: Luke 14:25-33**

**"Summoned to Be a Disciple!"**

When I am staying in a hotel out of town, I often pass the time by looking at the Yellow Pages of the local phone book. In particular, I like to see how various congregations advertise themselves.

For example, one church offers "We never met a stranger." Another congregation says "Come, grow with us." Yet another advertises "Serving the King, Reaching This Community, Impacting Nations."

The United Methodist Church presents itself as "Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors."

There is a congregation whose motto is "A Progressive Church with a Vision to Change the World." One congregation notes "We will help you become who you are."

I have not yet seen an advertisement that says "If you want to follow Jesus, you must give up all your possessions" (Luke 14:33). I have not yet seen an advertisement that says, "If you do not carry the cross, you cannot follow Jesus" (Luke 14:27). I have not yet seen an advertisement that says, "Hate your family and come follow Jesus" (Luke 14:26).

Those are not the kinds of things designed to attract new members! Yet, those are the provisions Jesus makes for discipleship.

Clearly, a call to discipleship is a call to re-orient values. A call to discipleship is a call to re-order priorities. A call to discipleship is a call to a life of difference.

Has anyone ever asked you "Why do you do that" and you could answer "Because I follow Jesus Christ"?

In the student's book for this session, Branson Thurston asks how honestly can we sing the hymn "Are Ye Able." (One of my prize possessions is a term paper my father wrote for Earl Marlatt, the author of this hymn. Professor Marlatt signed the comments he made on the paper, so I almost feel as if I have

an autographed copy of the hymn!) Indeed, are we able?

Someone has said that our baptism puts a contract for our death upon us. But, thanks be to God, it also puts a mark of grace and life upon us. So it is with discipleship.

## What Someone Else Has Said

In his classic *The Cost of Discipleship* (The Macmillan Company), Dietrich Bonhoeffer has said: "Discipleship means Jesus Christ, and Him alone. It cannot consist of anything more than that... Discipleship means adherence to Christ, and, because Christ is the object of that adherence, it must take the form of discipleship... When Christ calls (us), He bids (us) come and die."

## Prayer

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Gracious Lord, we hear Your call, but following is not so easy. Grace—grant us more grace..."

## conference CALENDAR

### January 2008

- 1 UM Building closed for New Year's Holiday
- 4 UMW School of Christian Mission Meeting; 4:30-6 pm; St. Pauls UMC: Goldsboro
- 4 UMW Executive Committee Meeting Dinner; 6:15pm; St Pauls UMC: Goldsboro
- 4 UMW District President's Meeting; 7pm; St Pauls UMC: Goldsboro
- 4 UMW Conference Program Committee Meeting; 7:45pm; St Pauls UMC: Goldsboro
- 5 UMW Executive Committee Meeting; 9am; St Pauls UMC: Goldsboro
- 17 Continuation Interviews, St. Luke UMC: Goldsboro

### February 2008

- 11-14 Probationary Interviews, Hayes Barton UMC, Raleigh
- 22-23 UMW Conference 39 & Under Event; First UMC, Graham

For more information, visit [www.nccumc.org](http://www.nccumc.org) and click on "Calendar" at the top of the page.

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# around the CONFERENCE

## Fair Haven and Clark's Bethel UMC ground breaking

Members of Fair Haven and Clark's Bethel United Methodist Churches broke ground for a parsonage near Fair Haven UM Church in Rodanthe, Elizabeth City District. Charge Pastor Cris Noble prayed for the hands that would build the parsonage as well as for members of the congregation whose vision and hard work led to the event.



## Copeland receives UM campus ministry award

The United Methodist Campus Ministry Association has presented its Allan Burry Award to The Rev. Jennifer Copeland, an elder in the South Carolina Conference.

Copeland, the campus minister for the Wesley Fellowship at Duke University, was recognized for "promoting campus ministry



Copeland

servant leadership."

The Allan Burry Award is one of three honors presented by the national Campus Ministry Association to exemplary leaders of United Methodism's presence on college and university campuses.

Copeland has been appointed to the campus ministry at Duke since 1999.



## Merrill, Parker elected SEJ UMM officers

Two United Methodist Men from the North Carolina Conference were elected officers for the Southeastern Jurisdiction UMM. Barry Merrill, NC Conference UMM president, was elected secretary, and Mack Parker, past NC Conference UMM president and current 3rd vice-president, was named finance committee chairman. Pictured are (front row, l to r) Mack Parker, Larry Burian of Va. UMM, by-laws-legislative chair, John Dowell of FL, Gen Comm. UMM rep., Ingram Howard of TN, treasurer, (back row) Dick Strachan of WNC, future planning chair, L.W. Smith of SC, president, Ed Shytle of KY, UMM Foundation rep., Bill Smith, 2nd VP, and Barry Merrill. Elections were held during the SEJ UMM meeting at Simpsonwood Retreat Center, home of the N. GA. Conference, outside Atlanta.

## Veterans honored at Chestnut Street UMC, Lumberton

On November 7, Chestnut Street UMC in Lumberton honored its veterans including two who are now serving overseas, Major Jason MacDonald and Major George H. Brown.

Each veteran brought memorabilia from their different war experiences. This included pictures, uniforms and maps.

Jan Kennedy, director of Education Ministries and leader of the program, introduced Jay White, a member of the NC National Guard. He completed a tour in Iraq and will return in Jan. 2009 for a second tour.

White gave a history of Veterans Day and what it means to be a veteran.



Veteran Olin Welsh is shown beside his display ready to answer questions and share about his experiences.

He also led the group in a litany honoring veterans.

After the program, each veteran stood by their display to answer questions and to share of their war experience.

## Shuler offers sermon at MU baccalaureate

Methodist University celebrated its 35th Annual Winter Commencement ceremony Saturday, Dec. 15, 2007 at 2 p.m. in the March F. Riddle Center.

The day's events began with a baccalaureate service at 10:30 a.m. in Reeves Auditorium with a sermon from the Rev. Albert Shuler.

Shuler delivered a sermon titled "It's Up to You" with the scripture lesson from Isaiah 35: 1-10. He currently serves as senior pastor at Jarvis Memorial UMC in Greenville.



Albert Shuler

The 228 candidates for graduation included the inaugural classes from MU's Master of Justice Administration (MJA) program and from The Professional Master of Business Administration (MBA) at Pinchurst®.



## Martin recognized for 66 years of service by Bethany UMC, Rocky Mt. District

Bealie J. Martin, Jr., longtime member of Bethany UMC in the Rocky Mount District, was recently recognized and presented an Award of Service in appreciation of 66 years of service as church school secretary. Church members, family and friends attended this special recognition during worship.

### Submitting "Around the Conference" Items:

Send stories to [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org). The deadline is the 5th day of the month. All articles and photos subject to editing. Photographs or art should be recorded in the largest size and highest resolution possible and sent in JPG or TIFF formats.





# Beware of *Los Tigres*

By Cookie Santiago \*

"It was their idea," she tells. The children that come to the tutoring program at Cristo Vive UMC in Durham told the Rev. Rosanna Panizo, known to them as "La Pastora," that they wanted to form a soccer team.

Thirteen boys and one girl practice hard on Saturday mornings. Many of them live in apartments and do not have a yard or safe place that they can play. This is good for their health, providing lots of exercise, running and fresh air.

Panizo tells about having to cancel practice one day due to bad weather.

**...Soccer will provide a place to for them to experience what is fair and to experience victory.**

— Rev. Rosanna Panizo

This was followed by the pitter-pattering of soccer shoes running to the window at the sound of every automobile that drove by—and disappointment not to see that white 15 passenger van with the words "Cristo Vive" (Christ Lives) across the side.

Not surprisingly, the children were not able to sleep well the night before their first game because of their excited anticipation.

The children wanted uniforms that were red and blue. The uniforms of the professional team "Barcelona" were chosen because they feature UNICEF, or United

Nations Children's Fund, focused on children's rights, survival, development and protection through education, advocacy, and fundraising.

These are things that Panizo is very familiar with. These are the things that are important to her ministry. This was a good choice for the children to model after.

As she tells another piece of the story, she chuckles again. Picking a name? Well they came up with "Angels." This is something that reflects the church.

However, the children discussed it some more and agreed that this is too "soft" a name for a soccer team. They tossed around stronger sounding titles, "Eagles, Bears, Tigers..." And finally there was agreement: *Los Tigres* (The Tigers)!

*Los Tigres* practiced for months before they played their first game. They have played two so far, winning one, and not losing or winning the other with a score of zero - zero.

And the hope is to organize a soccer league among UMC children's groups in the North Carolina Conference that they can play against. Now, they are playing with soccer groups from other denominations.

Last year Resurrection UMC provided toys for the church—and this year they are doing the same.



Playing on the *Los Tigres* soccer team is a dream come true for the dedicated participants. The children also come to the tutoring program at Cristo Vive

They were given a list of the 45 children that are part of Cristo Vive to receive No. 5 professional soccer balls. The children were very specific to be sure not to receive a No. 3 that is for children or a No. 4 for older children. A professional or adult level soccer ball is No. 5 and they feel ready for the challenge.

"I like that part of my ministry," Panizo says with a chuckle in her voice. Then growing a bit more somber at the realizations of her community she goes on to say, "Sometimes..." and she pauses as if second guessing what she thought she would say. And then, with boldness Panizo says: "...I enjoy those kids more than preaching a sermon. They have tough insights on life and justice—soccer will provide a place to for them to experience what is fair and to experience victory."

\* Cookie Santiago is conference director of Hispanic/Latino ministries.

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## The children of Broadway UMC fill a "bucket of blessings" overflowing with support for MHC's 1K for 1Kid campaign

"It is with great joy," wrote the Rev. David Malcolm in his letter to the Methodist Home for Children, "that I present these two checks totaling \$1005.07."

Week after week throughout the fall and winter of 2007, the children brought their coins to fill up the "Bucket of Blessings." They were hard at work supporting MHC's "1K for 1Kid" campaign.

Malcolm began the project during worship using a sheetrock bucket as a collection plate.

When asked if they thought they could fill the bucket, the children's answer was a resounding, "Yes!"

"The money came

in sandwich bags and in small buckets and small cans, or from their pockets," wrote Malcolm. "A few always had their coins carefully tucked away in their palms."

A young girl whose family began attending Broadway in mid-December heard of the project and brought her entire penny collection the next Sunday—pouring over 500 pennies into the bucket. "She gave everything she had," said Malcolm.

When the bucket grew too heavy to carry into the sanctuary each week, a church member built a wheeled dolly.

"Sundays after the children's message,

the children would take hold of the rope attached to the dolly and pull the bucket up and out of the sloped sanctuary into the vestibule so that others in attendance could donate after the close of the worship service," said Malcolm.

The "1K for 1Kid" campaign is an

initiative to encourage support for MHC's mission to serve children, youth, and families in need. The care provided through MHC typically costs approximately \$1,000 more per child than is funded through grants and partnerships.

**When asked if they thought they could fill the bucket, the children's answer was a resounding, "Yes!"**



Children at Broadway UMC (Sanford District) helped collect \$1,005.07 for the Methodist Home for Children's "1K for 1Kid" initiative. The children, and others in the congregation, contributed weekly to the "Bucket of Blessings" during the children's message. In the photograph are some of the children at Broadway. As the bucket grew too heavy to lift, a church member built a wheeled dolly so the children could pull the bucket into the vestibule after the children's message.

## Duke Divinity School receives \$14 million to create new Christian Leadership Initiative

By Jon Goldstein \*

Duke Divinity School received a \$14 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. to establish an initiative that will help Christian leaders combine theological insight with wise business practices to meet real-world challenges, Duke University President Richard H. Brodhead announced.

When fully developed, the initiative will teach, coach and provide resources for leaders of key Christian institutions that support and sustain congregations and pastors.

Its reach will extend from bishops and executive directors of denominations to senior leaders of seminaries and other organizations that serve congregations.

The initiative will develop a variety of programs that focus on leading and managing Christian institutions, offering some programs on an open-application basis and customizing others for specific groups.

The initiative also will convene Christian leaders at Duke and across the country to address pivotal issues, and

See "Duke Leadership grant" page 6

## Delegates to vote on development of new hymnal; all asked to pick hymns

By Jeanette Pinkston \*

When General Conference meets this spring, delegates will consider publishing a new hymnal—and the General Board of Discipleship (GBOD) wants members of all ages and stages to decide what hymns to include, should a new hymnal be given the nod.

The agency is conducting a series of

online hymnal surveys between now and March 1. Each survey will feature a question related to musical or liturgical (worship) content. Participants will have approximately two weeks to complete each survey.

"A new hymnal is a once-a-generation event. The information we receive from

See "New hymnal," page 13

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Carmen Casillas, from Pine Valley UMC in Jacksonville and EMBRACE coordinator in the New Bern District, emphasizes a point during discussion with NC Conference participants at the conclusion of the diversity event. Listening to her comments (L-R) are Paul Leeland, assistant to Bishop Al Gwinn; Bishop Al Gwinn, Casillas, and Chuck Cook, Goldsboro district superintendent. (Photo by Bill Norton)

## SEJ diversity convocation from page 1

Commission on Religion and Race, spoke directly to whites in attendance. "We know that we're 92 percent white in The United Methodist Church, so we can't go forward in a ministry of reconciliation without your support," she said.

Woodie White, bishop in residence at Candler School of Theology in Atlanta and former bishop of the Indianapolis Area, said he believed there had "never been a gathering as racially or ethnically inclusive" at Lake Junaluska.

The retreat center was for whites only into the 1960s. "I remember what it was so I can give thanks for what it's become," White said.

### Listening skills emphasized

Attendees broke into small groups that were racially and geographically diverse. Listening skills were strongly emphasized as the groups grappled with questions related to inclusiveness and welcoming.

"People will change when we get to a place when we open ourselves up to understanding who (our neighbors) are," said Herb Walters of Rural Southern Voice for Peace, a Burnsville, N.C.-based conflict resolution organization.

As an example, Walters said his group has connected with conservative evangelical church members in the area who share a "love for these mountains and want to take better care of God's creation."

Walters encouraged participants to conduct similar listening sessions in their local churches and communities. "We need some rednecks in these groups," Walters joked. "We want them all. But the people we need to reach don't come. Words like 'multiculturalism' and 'diversity' scare those people away."

### Breaking down barriers

In a sermon, White reminded participants that the church came into being in diversity. "How did we miss it (in Acts 2)?," White asked. "The context is utterly diverse, multilingual, multicultural, multiethnic. ... God said 'this is the setting. ... This is how I want

it to be.' In the midst of that diversity something happened. The Holy Spirit came among them and broke down the barriers.

"Heaven will be integrated," White continued. "I know hell will be integrated. This (earthly life) is a trial run....If you can't get it together here, you'll be miserable in eternity--whichever way you go."

### Sharing experiences

Representatives of several ministries spoke of their experiences. The Rev. Sylvia Collins, a Native American pastor in the Rockingham district of the NC Conference, said she realized early she could answer a call to ministry in The United Methodist Church.

"The Lord brought me out of the tobacco fields and planted me in a place that is rich with love," she said.

"At Sunday morning worship I see every pew filled and every pew diverse because of what we believe," said the Rev. Laura Early in celebrating her congregation.

All God's Children United Methodist Church, a new church started near Ahoskie, has an equal black and white membership.

Silvia Peterson, director of Centre Latino in Mitchell County in western NC, said Hispanics will continue to come to the U.S. despite immigration crackdowns because "we all have a dream when we come to this country that this is a land of endless possibilities."

She added that she wishes "we will all listen to the words we say in church and try harder to live out what they mean."

Swanson said he probably won't see racial equality achieved in his lifetime. "But because I'm a person of hope, even if I won't get there, it's no excuse (not) to try and make it happen. We are a people who believe in transformation. ... When people say that we're fighting a losing battle, tell them they have no choice because we are children of Christ."

\* Neill Caldwell is editor of *The Virginia United Methodist Advocate*.

## Local church property and casualty insurance workshop coming Feb. 24

A workshop on local church property and casualty insurance, sponsored by the Conference Board of Trustees will be held on Sunday, Feb. 24, 3 p.m. at Centenary UMC in New Bern.

The workshop will cover insurance in general as well as the special risk factors facing local churches. Intentional focus will be given to risk factors facing coastal congregations.

All pastors, trustees chairs, and anyone interested in insurance issues

and risks facing local congregations are encouraged to attend.

Representatives from the UM Property and Casualty Trust (PACT) will lead the meeting. PACT is an all-lines (including Worker's Compensation) non-profit insurance trust owned by UM annual conferences, agencies and local churches.

For more information on PACT or the insurance workshop, please contact the Conference Treasurer's Office at (800) 849-4433.

## Order of Elders meets April 14

The next Gathering of the NC Conference Order of Elders will be Monday, April 14, 9 am-3 pm, at Nashville UMC in Nashville.

The guest speaker will be Dr. N. Graham Standish, author of several books, including *Becoming a Blessed Church: Forming a Church of Spiritual Purpose, Presence, and Power*. He is a Presbyterian pastor, retreat leader, spiritual director, and a consultant

who works with the Alban Institute.

Questions can be directed to Mack McMillan, chair of the Order of Elders, at [smcmillan@nccumc.org](mailto:smcmillan@nccumc.org).

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# Durham faith teams support those recently released from prison

By Kelly Hardenbrook \*

Inspired by the example of John Wesley, a local UMW Circle first formed partnerships between individuals recently released from prison and faith teams composed of members of local churches.

Uplifted by the support of a Comprehensive Plan of Inclusiveness grant from the NC Conference, the Reconciliation and Re-entry Ministry is now a branch of the Religious Coalition for a Nonviolent Durham and supported by area United Methodist Churches.

Rather than being referred to as "ex-offenders" or "ex-cons," participants in the ministry are called "partners" to emphasize the aim of mutual support and empowerment among the members.

The goal, according to Marcia Owen, UMC member and outreach coordinator for the Religious Coalition, is to communicate "unconditional love and acceptance" in a manner that honors the "sanctity of the partner's dignity and self-worth and leads to an

abundant new life free of crime."

With over 38,000 people currently in state prisons, there is a significant need for caring communities that will welcome those who are returning home in a spirit of love and acceptance.

The Reconciliation and Re-entry Ministry works with the Durham County Criminal Justice Resource Center, a local government agency which supervises newly released prisoners, identifies their needs, and refers them to the ministry's faith teams.

Reverend Duke Lackey, pastor at Trinity UMC in Durham, has participated in faith teams for the past two years and describes it as "a very positive experience" because the partners are "people who want to make a difference, who want to turn their lives around."

## Acceptance brings healing

The return home from prison provides a tremendous opportunity for change and renewal for released prisoners and faith community members.

Released prisoners have many tangible needs such as finding a place to live, a job with a living wage, avoiding substance abuse, connecting with community resources, and finding positive activities to fill spare time.



A Trinity UMC faith team and their partners pray at the conclusion of a bi-weekly meeting. Teams and partners covenant to meet for a minimum of a year and provide a "community of friends."

To begin a newly-directed life, released inmates also have intangible needs such as re-adjusting to an environment requiring more responsibility and self-determination.

Bonnie, Trinity UMC's second reentry partner, describes being amazed by her faith team's openness toward her: "They welcomed me as soon as I walked in the room. They weren't even scared to shake my hand."

Her faith team's unconditional acceptance of her as a person helped Bonnie learn to see herself as a woman worthy of respect and love. "These people never lived how I lived, but they treated me like my opinion mattered. When I think about how I used to live, I think 'that's not who I am anymore... that's not me,'" said Bonnie.

By covenanting to meet together for a minimum of one year, faith team members and partners have the opportunity to form relationships characterized by service, support, and extending love and grace into the life of another.

## Community support

Lackey cites the emphasis on communal support for the partner as a primary advantage of the ministry.

"So often, people get out of prison and go back to the same set of friends that contributed to the problem in the first place. We are able to provide them with a community, with a new set of friends," he said. According to Lackey,

See "Durham re-entry ministry," page 5



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## MHC receives gift from page 1

the total cost of care and the dollars MHC receives for services from partner agencies in social services, mental health, and juvenile justice.

In the 12-month period ending June 30, 2007, MHC worked with more than 1,300 children and families. "We still have plenty of work to do to provide for all the young people in our care," Stanley said.

Carver was preceded in death by her husband Willie who owned Carver Real Estate. Her obituary noted that she was "a kind and generous woman who supported numerous charities in the Durham area."

The magnitude of Carver's gift surprised MHC officials who said that her estate plans were not shared in advance with the agency.

"Clearly, Mrs. Carver was a thoughtful and compassionate woman who cared deeply about the well-being of children," stated Stanley. "By leaving MHC such a providential donation, she expressed confidence in our stewardship and in our ability to provide services that genuinely transform the lives of young people and families," he said.

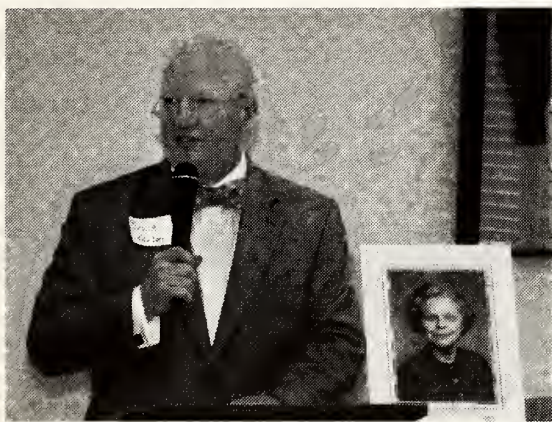
"I am in awe that this modest and unassuming

woman gave so deeply in response to her faith," Stanley said. "She made her gift quietly and humbly. We all can look to Mrs. Carver as a role model for how we treat the resources God has entrusted to us."

Founded in 1899 as a campus orphanage in Raleigh, Methodist Home for Children now provides community-based services for children and families throughout North Carolina.

Service areas include foster care, adoption, family counseling and reunification, residential care, and the Jordan Child and Family Enrichment Center, a five-star inclusive childcare facility located in Raleigh.

For more information on MHC, visit their web site at [www.mhfc.org](http://www.mhfc.org).



A photograph of Ruth Jackson Carver was displayed behind Bruce Stanley, Methodist Home for Children president/CEO, as he announced the receipt of \$5.2 million from Carver's estate. Photo by Bill Norton.

## Durham re-entry ministry from page 4

"by believing in them and providing the necessary support, we can help them become full members of society."

According to Peter Bell, who began participating in the ministry as a partner and now sits on the faith team of another individual, "my faith team helped me attain the goals that I set for myself in prison. They came to the DMV with me and helped me get a license, gave me good references to help me get a job, and even helped me get a car."

Bell says that his final goal is to become a homeowner and is preparing to buy his first house. He is a very active member of the Durham community and is frequently invited to share his life story and enjoys ministering to youth.

### Ministry of presence

The Reconciliation and Re-entry Ministry's emphasis on forming relationships founded on acceptance and mutual support equips the faith teams to provide what Owen calls "a ministry of presence" in which the partner is affirmed through the listening presence of others.

Partners are able to share their stories in a safe environment where their strengths are affirmed and where their

potential for growth and success is emphasized over their past mistakes.

Bell argues that his success would not have been possible "without God's grace and the help of my faith team."

He wholeheartedly proclaims the significance of the Ministry as a means of providing acceptance and support for individuals who are transitioning back into society: "the re-entry program is very valuable and needed in our community. Every church should have two or three faith teams to reach out to people who are coming back to the community from prison. We can be there for them, giving them love and hope... we can give them strength and a life."

### For more information

The Religious Coalition for a Nonviolent Durham received the 2006 Lay Ministry Award for the work of the Reconciliation and Re-entry Ministry.

For more, contact Marcia Owen, outreach coordinator, at [mowen8@nc.rr.com](mailto:mowen8@nc.rr.com) or visit the Religious Coalition for a Nonviolent Durham's web site: [www.nonviolentdurham.org](http://www.nonviolentdurham.org).

\* Kelly Hardenbrook is an intern for The Religious Coalition.

## Bequest may be largest to NCC agency

*The \$5.2 million gift to the Methodist Home for Children from the estate of Ruth Jackson Carver appears to be the largest gift to a United Methodist related agency in the North Carolina Conference.*

"To my knowledge, this is the largest single bequest any conference-related agency has received," said Lynn James, executive director of the United Methodist Foundation, Inc. (UMF).

James has been associated with bequests and endowments in the conference through the MHC and UMF for over 17 years.

"There is much to celebrate about this wonderful legacy gift — particularly the spirit in which it was given," said James.

The bequest to MHC was arranged by Carver through her legal counselor and her bank.

Although UMF did not have direct involvement in the gift or the MHC endowment, it offers individuals and families estate planning assistance with gifts similar to the one Mrs. Carver made.

The unrestricted gift will be

added to the MHC endowment and is expected to generate about \$250,000 yearly for operating expenses.

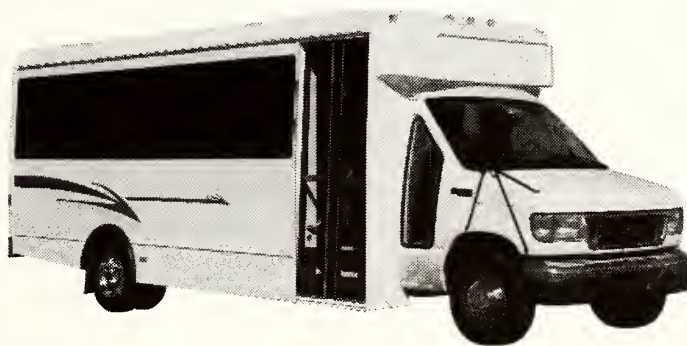
"For legacy gifts such as this, it is not just a matter of how much ministry it will accomplish today, but how very much more it will accomplish far into the future through the good stewardship of endowment management," James said.

The Foundation holds over \$100 million in socially-responsible investments for NC Conference churches and conference agencies.

Since 1996, the Foundation has earned \$57 million on investments for its partners.

UMF is trustee for a variety of accounts including building funds, mission endowments, scholarships, awards, cemetery maintenance funds, and memorial funds.

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# Three ministries honored by Conference Commission on Church & Society through prophetic ministry award

The Conference Commission on Church and Society announced three recipients of the 2007 Jack and Kay Crum Award for Prophetic Ministry.

## Oleander UMC

Oleander UMC in Wilmington and pastor, Linda Taylor, were honored for



a program called "Connecting Hearts through the Arts." The program is designed to find a common ground for Hispanic/Latinos moving into the area and the local persons using the arts.

The program is not meant to be a political forum or a place of judgment, but a way for the Church to offer "radical hospitality" to those who are seeking a place of refuge.

Taylor says she sees her role as one who "continually challenges to Church to be a force that heals, not one that hurts and divides."

## Cristo Vive UMC

Cristo Vive UMC in Durham and the Rev. Rosanna Panizo-Valladares

were recognized for an after school program for Hispanic/Latino children. Panizo picks up the children from school and brings them to the church where they are provided tutoring and spiritual guidance.

She coordinates and recruits various public agencies, such as the Literary Foundation, to assist. (The children also formed a soccer team featured in the January 2008 *Advocate*.)

While the children are participating in their activities, the mothers are in English as a Second Language classes. In addition, infant siblings are cared for, and the toddler siblings receive age-appropriate lessons to help prepare them for public school.

## Queen Street UMC

Queen Street UMC in Kinston received the honor for its Coffee House ministry each Friday night, which draws between 45 and 90 youth from the community.

There are games (ping-pong, four-square, pool, and video), a '50's style diner, youth worship and devotion, music, and supervised socializing.

It provides a 3-4 hour block of time where youth from all sides of town come together, "hang out," and know they will be safe.

The Rev. Allen Bingham is the pastor and Sammy Hudson is the program's director.

## Endowment encourages prophetic ministries

The Endowment for a Prophetic Church was established by John Hammond (Jack) and Kay Crum in 1990 with United Methodist Foundation, Inc, Raleigh, as Trustee.

Distributions from the earnings of the Endowment are directed through the Commission on Church and Society Ministry Team of the North Carolina Conference.

A financial award is provided to each recognized ministry from the proceeds of the Endowment.

The Endowment was created "for the purpose of encouraging churches to be prophetic and of supporting prophetic ministries."

Prophetic in the name of the Endowment is defined by reference to the Scriptures calling for a new social order in seeking a society of love and peace with justice for all in the present time. The purpose is to aid churches in becoming active in social action as distinguished from social service.

For example, the purpose is to change public prejudices and policies so that all races and nationalities can have equal opportunity rather than merely feeding disadvantaged people in a food line.

Promoting these prophetic actions, speaking for the Lord in behalf of the Kingdom of God, is the purpose of this award.

## Nominations due Feb. 18

Nominations are now being received for the 2008 Crum Award for Prophetic Ministry. To nominate a church or ministry, email a description of the ministry to Steve Taylor at [staylor@nccumc.org](mailto:staylor@nccumc.org) and to Becky Biegger at [beckybiegger@nccumc.org](mailto:beckybiegger@nccumc.org) no later than Feb. 18.

## Duke leadership grant awarded continued from page 2

will develop a web site where leaders of Christian institutions can interact to share resources and ideas.

Goals include helping Christian leaders analyze the important issues they face, pursue new opportunities, collaborate with one another in creatively addressing systemic challenges, and support and encourage one another in their work.

"This new project is an exciting and innovative step," Brodhead said. "It builds on distinctive strengths at Duke and exemplifies the university's special interest in not only developing new knowledge but also applying that knowledge broadly in the service of society. We are grateful for the support from the Lilly Endowment that makes this project possible."

Divinity School Dean L. Gregory

Jones said the initiative advances the Divinity School's work cultivating pastoral leaders, building on the extensive work of Pulpit & Pew, a Lilly Endowment-funded series of research and other programs that began in 1999.

Duke will develop this new effort in cooperation with Lilly Endowment, denominations, seminaries and other partners. Colleagues from Duke Corporate Education and the Fuqua School of Business will be key partners.

The leadership initiative is an opportunity for the Divinity School to serve the church by strengthening Christian institutions across the country, Jones added.

"Pastoral ministry and congregations, along with Christian institutions that support them, are as important now as ever," Jones said. "This is a great time to focus on their work in Christian ministry with creativity, energy and a renewed sense of mission. With this initiative, Duke is positioned to be a catalyst by supporting those doing the most creative and effective work, by convening those willing and eager to tackle tough problems, and by bringing constructive new ideas and resources from other spheres into play in the religious domain."

Craig Dykstra, senior vice president for religion at Lilly Endowment Inc., said Christian leaders need educational programs specifically tailored for their needs.

"Duke's new initiative promises to play an important role in strengthening the whole institutional infrastructure that is essential for enabling pastors and local congregations to flourish," he said.

"In virtually every major profession, the leaders of its key institutions have places to go where they can learn from the best the field has to offer. Now Duke Divinity School will be able to combine its own extraordinary resources with those of the wider university and elsewhere—including experts in business and other relevant fields—to provide such a context for Christian institutional leaders on a broad scale."

The Lilly Endowment Inc. is a philanthropic foundation created in 1937 to support programs nationally in the field of religion as well as in education and community development, primarily in Indiana.

Duke Divinity School is one of Duke University's seven graduate and professional schools. It is affiliated with the United Methodist Church and enrolls about 550 students from more than 30 denominations.

\* Jon Goldstein is senior director of communications for Duke University's Divinity School.

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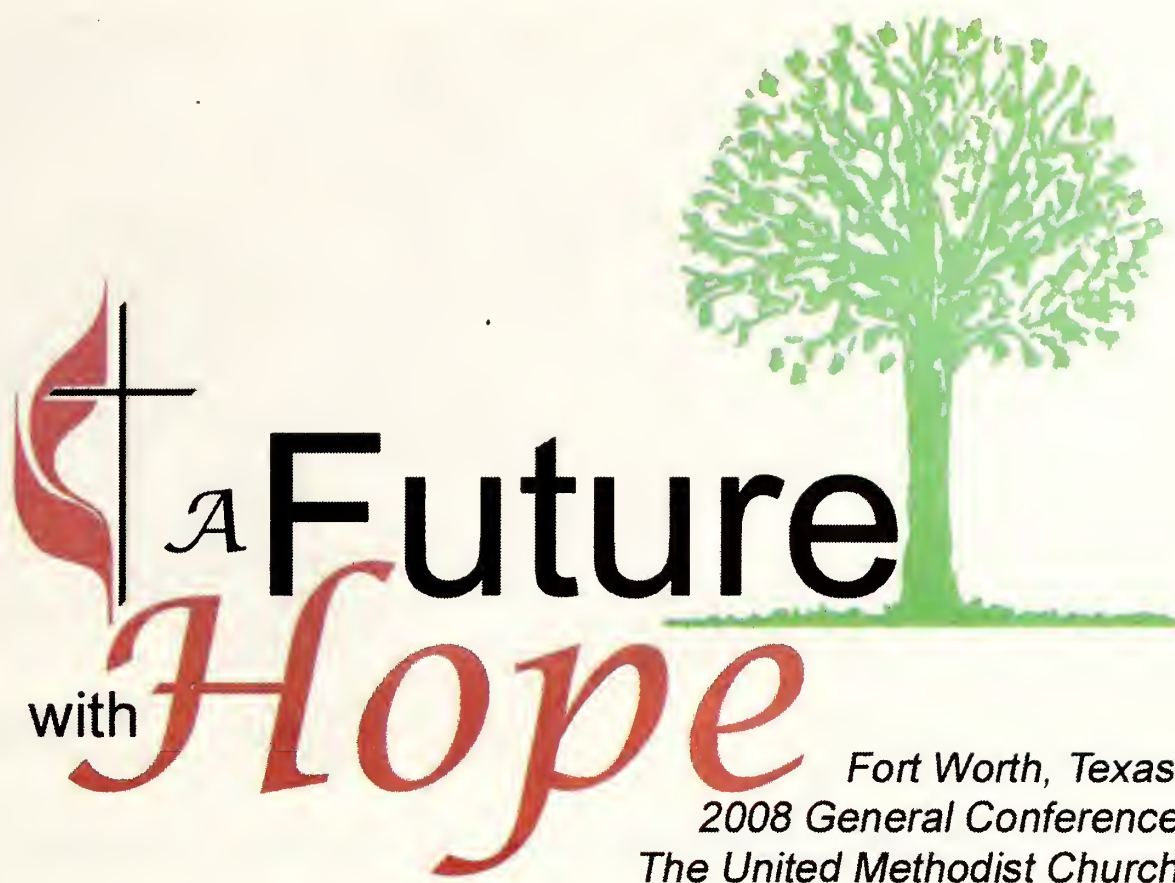
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# Exploring General Conference

The United Methodist Church's top legislative assembly, the General Conference, meets April 23-May 2, 2008 to set direction for the denomination for the following four years. This guide provides an overview of the gathering, how it works and its significance in the life of the church.

## What is General Conference?

As the top policy-making body of the international United Methodist Church, General Conference is the only body that officially speaks for the 11.5-million member denomination (13 million if including baptized children who have not become members).

### Revising the Book of Discipline

During the nine-day session, 992 delegates will revise the *Book of Discipline*, which regulates the manner in which local churches, annual conferences and general agencies are organized.

The book also sets policies regarding church membership, ordination, administration, property and judicial procedures.

The assembly may modify most disciplinary paragraphs by majority vote, but the Constitution can only be amended by a two-thirds affirmative vote, followed by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the aggregate number of members voting in annual conference session.

Delegates may not revoke or change the Articles of Religion or the Confession of Faith unless two-thirds of the delegates agree to change this provision and three-fourths of the annual conference members also agree.

Delegates also revise the *Book of Resolutions*, a volume declaring the church's stance on a wide variety of social justice issues.

The book contains more than 300 resolutions that are considered instructive and persuasive, but are not binding on members.

## Who are the delegates?

The 992 delegates to the 2008 gathering are United Methodists elected by their annual conferences. Annual conferences consist of ordained clergypersons and an equal number of laypersons elected by their local churches.

Every four years, annual conferences elect equal numbers of lay and clergy members to represent them at General Conference. The number of delegates is based on the number of clergy members and the number of lay members. Conferences are guaranteed at least one clergy and one lay delegate. The Constitution permits General Conference to be composed of at least 600 and no more than 1,000 delegates.

### SEJ has largest delegation

Churches in the Southeastern Jurisdiction will have the largest number of delegates from the U.S.

However, because of membership increases in central conferences (outside the United States), that jurisdiction will have only 252 delegates, down from 278 at the 2004 gathering.

North Central will have 138, down from 164; Northeastern, 126, down from 144; South Central, 148, down from 170; and Western, 40, down from 44.

Africa will be represented by 186 of the central conference delegates, up 94 from 2004. The 21 annual conferences in the Philippines will have 42 delegates.

An additional 10 delegates will come from "concordat" churches with which the denomination has a formal relationship.

## The Conference theme and location

The theme of the 2008 General Conference is "A Future With Hope."

"We're trying to move General Conference from what it now is — an exercise in the management of petitions — to a genuine Christian conferencing with high quality conversation about the most important issues facing the church and the world," said Gail Murphy-Geiss, chairwoman of the Commission on General Conference. "We hope the conference will be more positive and uniting — a movement toward a 'future with hope.'"

The commission is asking the conference to change the constitution to limit the number of delegates from a 1,000 maximum to a 600 maximum in order to increase dialogue and reduce costs.

### Rotating meeting sites

Meeting sites have traditionally rotated among the church's five geographic U.S. jurisdictions. Future General Conferences could also be scheduled outside the United States.

The conference was held in 1996 in Denver (Western Jurisdiction), in 2000 in Cleveland (North Central Jurisdiction), and in 2004 in Pittsburgh (Northeastern Jurisdiction). The 2008 conference will be in Fort Worth, Texas (South Central Jurisdiction). The 2012 gathering is scheduled for Tampa, Fla. (Southeastern Jurisdiction).



# Unprecedented unity for UMC mission initiatives

By Marta W. Aldrich \*

UMNS - How do you start a movement?

In The United Methodist Church, the hope is to stir the 11.5 million-member global denomination one step at a time, beginning with its agencies, annual conferences and local churches.

In a spirit of collaboration and consensus-building a "unity" resolution has identified four themes as the primary areas of emphasis for United Methodists at the dawn of the 21st century.

The initiatives give unified focus and resources to the United Methodist mission and to identify concrete actions needed to recapture the Wesleyan heritage toward "making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

"This is the first time in many years we've had this degree of collaboration going on," said Bishop Bruce Ough, chairman of the Council of Bishops planning team that started the process.

"It's a huge step forward when the council, general agencies and Connectional Table (of church leadership) can all say that we're working together on the same areas of emphasis."

## Mission initiatives: a new agenda

Developed out of a two-year journey of conversation and prayer among church leaders, the four areas of emphasis initially were known as the four "provocative propositions" but now are being called the church's "mission initiatives." They are:

- Leadership development;
- Building new congregations and revitalizing existing ones;
- Ministry with the poor, particularly children;
- Combating the preventable diseases of poverty, such as malaria, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis.

This is a long-term agenda addressing long-term problems in both the church and the world.

"Everyone I talk with affirms the power and promise of these four directions because they are embedded in our Wesleyan DNA, turn our collective attention to a hurting and hungry world, and make clear what is vitally important in our witness and mission together," said Neil Alexander, president of the church's publishing agency.

Larry Hollon of UM Communications says the mission initiatives free the church to concentrate on priorities amid the sometimes frenzied nature of church work. "I think what we're saying is that it's time to be very serious about collaboration," said Hollon. "... I think there's a deep yearning in the church for focus and unity."

Ough emphasizes that these mission initiatives sprang up from the local level – not as mandates from a disconnected church polity. "What we tried to do is to start by asking where our conferences already are trying to lead and follow God's call," he said. "This is not top down; this is bubbling up."

Out of that conversation, the Council of Bishops developed a list called the "Seven Vision Pathways," identifying mission areas where bishops could provide leadership for the church.

This provided the base for the four mission initiatives and four related "calls to action" that are still being developed.

\* Marta Aldrich is news editor of UM News Service.



## Legislative Committees

At the 2004 General Conference, NC Conference General Conference Delegates Belton Joyner (second from left) and Mack Parker (second from right) are shown listening to presentations during a Judicial Administration Legislative Committee meeting. Joyner is a retired clergy member of the conference and Parker is a member of North Raleigh UMC. At the 2008 General Conference, there will be 13 legislative committees which will recommend concurrence, nonconcurrence, modify or refer petitions before they go to the General Conference plenary for action. The 2008 committees are: Church and Society 1, Church and Society 2, Conferences, Discipleship, Faith and Order, Financial Administration, General Administration, Global Ministries, Independent Commissions, Judicial Administration, Local Church, Ministry and Higher Education, and Superintendency. (Photo by Bill Norton.)



## Six chosen to deliver first-ever YOUNG PEOPLE'S ADDRESS

Six United Methodists, ranging in age from 15 to 28, were chosen to work together to develop and deliver the first Young People's Address at the 2008 General Conference. The speakers will give a 45-minute presentation multi-layered with multimedia on the concerns, hopes and dreams of young people in the church. The 2004 General Conference voted overwhelmingly to add a Young People's Address to the agenda for 2008 and also approved creation of the Division on Ministries with Young People. Those making the presentation are (clockwise from left) Jason Rathod, 23, of Hastings, Neb.; Kira Volkova, 24, of Kirov, Russia; Matt Lockett, 20, of Seattle; Becca Farnum, 17, of Mount Pleasant, Mich.; the Rev. Anne Rigo, 28, of Grand Junction, Colo.; and Andrew Craig, 15, of Denver. A UMNS photo by Ronny Perry.



## A return to higher expectations

Delegates to the 2008 General Conference are being asked to change the tone of conversation and debate and endorse "Guidelines for Holy Conferencing—What God Expects of Us" as a blueprint for the way business is conducted at the legislative assembly meeting in Fort Worth, TX.

The guidelines, also offered to all United Methodist members and groups, are in response to the long-held concerns that the General Conference has resembled the style and conduct by secular political bodies.

Leaders hope for the higher expectations of a faith-focused group, said Bishop Janice Riggle Huie.

"Holy Conferencing sets United Methodists apart from other organizations....It focuses on discerning where God is leading us. It focuses on prayer, rational and respectful conversation, and a belief that with God, all things are possible," she said.

Following the principles also helps ensure that diverse voices are heard in the consideration of legislation and resolutions.

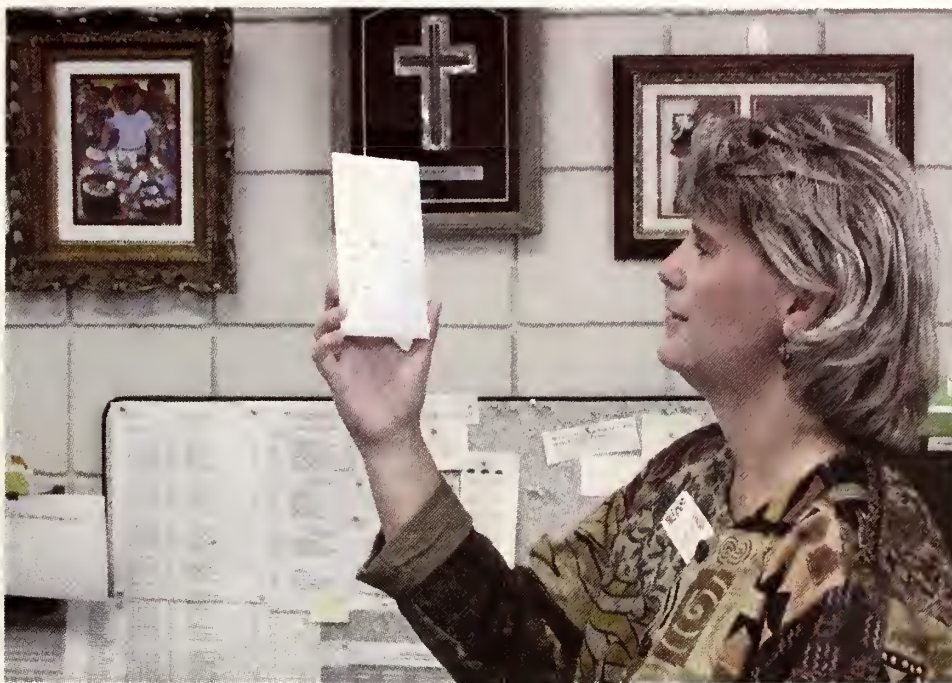
### Young people lead the way

Bishop Sally Dyck, who led a working group that refined the guidelines, credited the denomination's young people for bringing the issue to the forefront.

"Our United Methodist young people successfully used these principles when they met in South Africa [in 2006]," she said. "Their example is a lesson for the whole church: We can do things differently, respectfully and with God in the forefront."

## Holy Conferencing Guidelines:

1. Every person is a child of God. Always speak respectfully. One can disagree without being disagreeable.
2. As you patiently listen and observe the behavior of others, be open to the possibility that God can change the views of any or all parties in the discussion.
3. Listen patiently before formulating responses.
4. Strive to understand the experience out of which others have arrived at their views.
5. Be careful in how you express personal offense at differing opinions. Otherwise dialogue may be inhibited.
6. Accurately reflect the views of others when speaking. This is especially important when you disagree with that position.
7. Avoid using inflammatory words, derogatory names or an excited and angry voice.
8. Avoid making generalizations about individuals and groups. Make your point with specific evidence and examples.
9. Make use of facilitators and mediators.
10. Remember that people are defined, ultimately, by their relationship with God—not by the flaws we discover, or think we discover, in their views and actions.



LEFT:

The Rev. Page Hines, associate pastor at First UMC in Fort Worth, Texas, reads a hand-written prayer on an envelope containing seeds for planting in preparation for the 2008 General Conference.

United Methodists from across the United States wrote prayers on the envelopes. A UMNS photo by Steve Smith.

## Seedlings exemplify the Holy Spirit blossoming at General Conference

By Steve Smith \*

UMNS - To Marcia McFee, nothing exemplifies the Holy Spirit blossoming better than seeds.

In fact, United Methodists throughout Fort Worth and Dallas are planting McFee's seeds—literally—to prepare for the denomination's 2008 General Conference at the Fort Worth Convention Center.

As co-music director of the event along with Mark Miller, McFee distributed hundreds of seed packets to the Central Texas and North Texas annual conferences. Congregants will plant the seeds and bring the seedlings to General Conference as symbols of a unifying force in the global denomination.

"The symbol of seeds scattered and sown, planted, cared for and harvested is a familiar and powerful image throughout the Bible and especially in the parables of Jesus," said McFee, a UM consultant from California who specializes in planning and conducting worship services.

"We will not only speak of hope planted and nurtured, we will enact this in a powerful symbol of our commitment to each other and to this uniting desire for the growth of the word of hope and peace in Jesus Christ."

### Metaphors for growth

The 2008 General Conference logo is a tree embodying the convention's theme, "A Future with Hope," and an organizing symbol for worship services throughout the nine-day gathering.

"Each of the services has to do with the metaphors of the organic process of growing trees, growing our faith and service to the world and growing communities," McFee said. "All of these images have powerful biblical correlatives."

The first morning will open with a worship service dubbed "The Opening," with images of seeds breaking open to bring forth new life. The next day, "The Planting" will explore the image of the seedling and the call to plant for the future for the sake of future United Methodists. As the conference progresses, other metaphors will explore "Nurturing," "Residing," "Building" and "Sustaining" as the focus continues on living, growing faith in Jesus Christ, said McFee.

### Seeds of hope

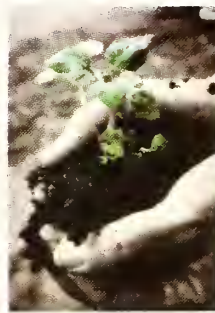
The idea of seed packets germinated about a year ago when McFee led a United Methodist worship

service called "Seeds of Hope." Participants put seeds into plain envelopes and wrote prayers of hope for The United Methodist Church on each envelope.

From student forums, mission schools, annual conference worships, training events and programs at local churches, McFee collected hundreds of seed packets sent to churches in the Dallas area.

During the services, McFee uses a liturgy—"The Word of God" by Delores Dufner—replete with Scripture from:

- Psalm 92—"The righteous flourish like a palm tree, and grow like a cedar in Lebanon;"
- Jeremiah 17 — "Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is in the Lord. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream;"
- Mark 4—"The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how."



### Planting the seeds

Staff members at Dallas/Fort Worth area churches will plant the seeds in early to mid-March, to ensure the seedlings will have a few weeks of growth by April 23, the convention's opening day.

McFee also asked church members to repeat prayers written on the envelopes by United Methodists from the U.S.

Seed packets were given to bishops at the United Methodist Council of Bishops meeting in November, especially those who don't live in North America for planting in their homelands. United Methodist missionaries also are taking seed packets to mission locations around the world.

"These seedlings will then grace our arena space for General Conference as a testament to the prayers and commitment of United Methodists across the connection," McFee said.

"At various times during the conference, we'll use the seedlings in worship. At one point we will pass these seedlings along the rows of worshipers as an act of prayer."

\* Steve Smith is a freelance writer in Dallas.





## First female head of state in Africa to speak at General Conference

United Methodist Bishop Peter Weaver presents a Bible to Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf during a prayer service on the eve of her 2005 inauguration as president of Liberia. Johnson-Sirleaf, a United Methodist and the first woman to be elected a head of state in Africa, is scheduled to address the 2008 General Conference, the denomination's top legislative body, on April 28 in Fort Worth, Texas. A UMNS file photo by Joseph Zeogar.

## How does the legislative process work?

At General Conference, petitions will be considered first by one of 13 legislative committees (up from 11 in 2004) that may vote to adopt, reject or refer. The Committee on Plan of Organization and Rules of Order is proposing to eliminate language of "concurrence or non-concurrence or concurrence as amended."

Most of the first four days is spent considering proposals in committees. During the second week, the entire gathering considers legislation proposed by the committees. A proposal coming from a committee is called a "calendar item."

Rules of General Conference are approved by delegates prior to any legislative actions. Rules proposed by the Committee on Plan of Organization and Rules of Order will call for legislative committee calendar items with fewer than 10 negative votes to be placed on a "consent calendar." If an item is not removed by a written request of 20 delegates, and if it does not involve funding or a constitutional amendment, the entire consent calendar is approved with a single vote. General Conference may change the specific rules related to the consent calendar, but the process enables the assembly to quickly deal with hundreds of legislative proposals.

If a calendar item with financial implications is passed by a majority of delegates, it is referred to the

General Council on Finance and Administration. Members of that agency return the legislation to a plenary session with a recommendation as to how the project or program is to be funded. Only after delegates approve or amend that recommendation is the legislation finally approved.

Prior to the conference, delegates receive an Advance Edition of the *Daily Christian Advocate*, containing the names of delegates and legislative committee assignments, reports from general agencies and all petitions. The edition is translated into Portuguese and French.

During the conference, delegates receive an English edition of the *Daily Christian Advocate*, containing the agenda, news, features, recommendations from legislative committees and a verbatim report of preceding plenary sessions. Those daily editions enable delegates to know which proposal is being debated and actions taken on previous days. By the end of the nine-day session, delegates will have received more than 2,500 DCA pages.

Plenary sessions are translated into German, French, Portuguese, Swahili, Spanish, Russian and Korean.

A computer-tracking system enables delegates and visitors to determine the status of any petition or calendar item.

## How does the petition process work?

Any United Methodist individual or organization may petition General Conference.

The United Methodist Church is the only denomination allowing individuals to petition their legislative assembly.

This year, as in 2004, Commission on General Conference will suggest a requirement that individuals submit their petitions through local church charge conferences or other denominational organizations. The 2004 request was defeated by the 2004 gathering.

Each petition can only address one paragraph in the *Book of Discipline* or one subject in the *Book of Resolutions*.

The petition should include a suggested topic, clear indication of the additions and deletions and whether financial costs are involved.

Petitioners may include a 50-word maximum rationale for disciplinary petitions. The rationale will be placed only on the General Conference Web site.

Petitions to be reviewed for the 2008 General Conference were due by Oct. 26, 2007.

## Who are the presiding officers?

One of the denomination's 69 active bishops will preside over each plenary session. However, bishops cannot vote on any of the proposals and may speak to issues only after approval by a majority of delegates.

Bishops are selected to preside by a committee of delegates, and a single bishop generally presides over only one plenary session.

Since the assembly sometimes gets into parliamentary problems, presiding officers ask colleagues to serve as parliamentarians.

Both active and retired bishops sit together behind the presiding officer.

## When is the gathering held?

The assembly meets once every four years in the months of April or May unless a special session to deal with a particular issue is called by the Council of Bishops or General Conference.

The nine-day 2008 session is two fewer days than in the preceding quadrennium. Normally, delegates have a free day on Sunday, but delegates to the 2008 session will worship together in the morning and be back in legislative sessions or plenary for the remainder of the day.

Central Texas Annual Conference, host of the assembly, will provide a special program on Sunday evening.

## What does the assembly cost?

The projected cost of the 2008 session is \$6.6 million, compared with \$5.3 million for the 2004 session and \$4.1 million for the 2000 conference.

This General Conference is two fewer days than in the past, reducing the cost of the assembly by \$163,000.

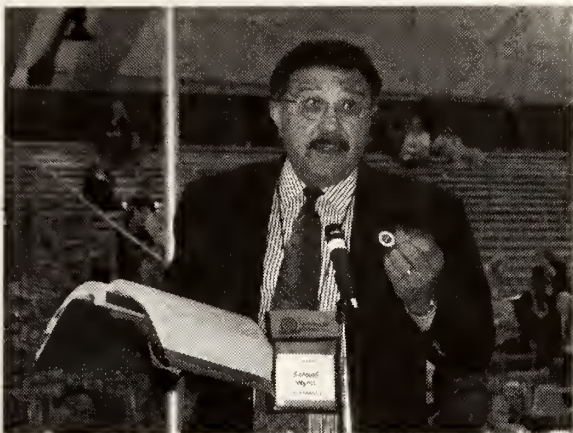
Three percent of the cost is for committee functions and Commission on General Conference expenses; 9 percent covers the cost of the offices of the business manager, treasurer and the secretary of the General Conference; 24 percent is for operations; 18 percent for language services; and 46 percent for delegate expenses.

About \$1.6 million pays for delegate travel, and \$1.4 million funds the cost of housing and food. The *Daily Christian Advocate* costs \$265,000 and the computer-tracking system is \$230,000. Renting the convention center is expected to total \$99,000.

*\* Unless otherwise noted, articles on pages 7, 10 and 11 excerpted from "General Conference 101: All you ever wanted to know" written by J. Richard Peck for United Methodist News Service.*

*Peck is a retired clergy member of New York Annual Conference. He has attended 10 General Conference sessions, including four as editor of the Daily Christian Advocate. Peck also served as an editor for United Methodist News Service at the 2004 assembly.*





Dr. Sam Wynn, pastor of Hollands UMC in Raleigh, is shown responding to a matter before the 2004 General Conference. Delegates raise a brightly colored card to be recognized by the presiding bishop who grants permission for the delegate to go to a microphone and address the conference. (Photo by Bill Norton.)

## What is the proposal for making the U.S. church a regional body?

United Methodist churches in the United States may become part of a regional body, similar to church units in Africa, Europe and Asia if the 2008 General Conference approves four constitutional amendments striking out language that says central conferences are only for areas of the church outside the U.S.

The changes would make the U.S. church more of an equal. Currently, the structure gives the U.S. church greater influence than its overseas counterparts.

If those amendments are approved, the way would be cleared for the 2012 General Conference to introduce legislation creating a central (or regional) conference for U.S. churches.

The proposal acknowledges the fact that 30 percent of United Methodist members now live outside the United States, and legislation that could be proposed to the 2012 General Conference would eliminate U.S.-specific concerns from General Conference. Those concerns would become the business of a U.S. Central Conference.

Bishop Patrick Streiff of the Central and Southern Europe Area said the proposal to make the United States a regional conference "gives possibility to separate U.S. business from the church worldwide" at General Conference. The "part of the church outside the U.S. is 30 percent, and it is just not possible to continue General Conference as we have."

Outside the US are now seven central (or regional) conferences. Those conferences are: Africa Central Conference, Congo Central Conference, West Africa Central Conference, Central and Southern Europe Central Conference, Germany Central Conference, Northern Europe Central Conference, and Philippines Central Conference.

Within the US there are five Jurisdictional Conferences (North Central, Northeastern, South Central, Southeastern and Western Jurisdictions).

"We believe God needs a church that is more fully ready for worldwide mission and ministry," said Bishop Ann Sherer.

The proposal also changes the constitutional terminology from "central conferences" to the terminology "regional conferences."

The 2008 General Conference will be asked to allow the task force and the Connectional Table to continue their study of the church's worldwide nature and report to the 2012 assembly.

## General Conference basics explored in free online course

UMNS - How are delegates elected to the United Methodist General Conference? How many votes are required for the assembly to approve a petition?

What is the role of bishops in the once-every-four-years gathering? And why is it important to keep a copy of the *Daily Christian Advocate* handy throughout the proceedings?

These and many other questions are answered in "Exploring General Conference," a five-session online course offered by United Methodist Communications for anyone wanting to learn more.

The course is free and being offered to give people a basic working knowledge of the church's legislative process in advance of the 2008 General Conference.

### Course contents & registration

The course includes information about a wide variety of topics including:

- The history, role and purpose of General Conference;
- How delegates are elected, their role and responsibilities;
- How petitions, the general church budget and other important matters are decided through General Conference;
- Social issues facing The United Methodist Church and the denomination's stance on those issues; and
- Highlights of the 2004 General Conference and what's ahead for 2008.

Participants move through the sessions at their own pace, and facilitated discussion forums are hosted throughout the course. In addition to interactive features such as videos and quizzes, participants can participate in forums to ask questions and share ideas.

The next offering of "Exploring General Conference" is Feb. 20 - Apr. 2. For registration information, visit <http://www.training.umcom.org>. For more information, call (888) 278-4862 or e-mail [training@umcom.org](mailto:training@umcom.org).

### Different reasons to learn more

"The course is ideal for anyone attending the 2008 General Conference as well as United Methodists interested in learning more about how the denomination makes decisions," said site administrator Cheryl A. Hemmerle.

Arthur Sponagel is participating because he wants to learn more about United Methodism. After spending most of his life in two other denominations, he has been a United Methodist since 1986.

"One thing I like about Methodism is you are expected to continue studying. I hope to learn more about how the church operates," said Sponagel of St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Las Cruces, N.M.

Betty Jackson signed up because she will serve as a volunteer marshal at the 2008 meeting. "I'm really excited about going," said Jackson, a member of Ebenezer United Methodist Church in New Johnsonville, Tenn. "I'm taking this course in hope it will give me an idea of what will be going on."

## How are seating assignments made?

With nearly 1,000 delegates, gaining the attention of the chair in order to speak to the assembly can be difficult. Therefore, seating assignments become very important. Delegations seated in the back half of the assembly hall in Pittsburgh will be in the front half in Fort Worth.

The Commission on General Conference places the names of 2004 delegations seated in the back half in a hat; commission members pull the names, with those first drawn gaining a seat on the front row.

The names of delegations that occupied front row seats in 2004 are drawn only after the other names have been drawn.

The delegation from Nigeria will be in the first row at the 2008 gathering.

A PDF file with the full seating assignments is posted on the General Conference section of the [www.umc.org](http://www.umc.org) web site.

## Who are some of the speakers?

Daily sessions begin with worship, and in the opening week there will be three speeches: an Episcopal address, Laity Address and a Young People's Address.

The Division on Ministries with Young People selected six young people ranging in age from 15 to 28 will deliver the first-ever Young People's Address.

## How do volunteers help at GC?

Some 4,000 volunteers serve in a variety of roles such as greeters, registration officials, marshals, pages, translators, hosts and hostesses, guides, drivers, musicians, technicians, reporters and emergency-response volunteers.

The Rev. Thomas Childs, director of host operations, said that nine teams will operate under the theme "Gracious Hospitality." The teams hope to "create an atmosphere of grace and civility that sets the stage for true Christian conferencing."

Among other things, the teams plan to offer health screenings, a daily exercise program, a fun run and a prayer room and labyrinth. They will provide tours, information about restaurants and special services for bishops and their spouses.

The teams also provide special care for international delegates and aid delegates who lose their luggage or experience housing problems.

The Episcopal Address will be given by Illinois Area Bishop Sharon Brown Christopher on behalf of the Council of Bishops. The Laity Address will be delivered by Lyn Powell, lay leader of the North Georgia Conference and president of the Southeastern Jurisdiction's lay leader association.





By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

# March *adult* BIBLE STUDY

**March 2, 2008**

**Text: 1 Chronicles 15:1-28**  
**"The Ark Comes to Jerusalem"**

How do you symbolize the fact that God is with you as you go about your daily life?

Some people wear a piece of jewelry (such as a cross) to remind them of God's presence. Others have carried with them a WWJD bracelet (What would Jesus do?). A few folks always have with them a pocket New Testament.

There are believers who take no external signs with them, but have the disciplines of daily prayer at certain times. For many Christians, the symbol of God's ongoing attendance is the pause for prayer before eating any meal.

The ark of the covenant (1 Samuel 4:4, for example) was such a symbol for the people of Israel.

This wooden box certainly did not contain God but had the power of the presence of God. (Paul Tillich said a sign simply points to something, but a symbol participates in the reality of the thing to which it points.)

How did the Israelites mark the fact that God was with them when they marched into the Promised Land? Joshua 3-4 indicates that the ark was carried before the people.

This week's study lesson zeroes in on the occasion when King David arranged for the ark to be brought to Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 15:3).

This action would be a shock to other religions—and to some of the Hebrews—who thought that gods were supposed to be localized, stationary, found only in their temple or shrine. The very idea of a god who could go with the people!

In some ways, the ark is a prefiguring of the Word that became flesh and lived among us (John 1:14). There is a joy in having God with us. There is a judgment in having God with us.

The ark represented the power and presence of God and that power, that presence, is both a challenge to our sin and a comfort for our broken places.

Here is a scary thought. In a few weeks, United Methodists from around the world will gather in Fort Worth for the quadrennial General Conference.

What would happen if the people of The United Methodist Church began to think of themselves as a new ark of the covenant, called to be a symbol (and reality) of the presence and power of God in today's world?

Such a Church would go wherever people go to be the healing and challenging presence of God.

Such a Church would work for justice, celebrate peace, and strive to be whole.

Just how would United Methodists become a symbol of the presence of God?

## What Someone Else Has Said

In Jan Karon's *Light from Heaven* (Penguin Books), one of the characters quotes James Hudson Taylor: "There are three stages in the work of God: impossible, difficult, done."

## Prayer

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Go with us, O God..."

**March 9, 2008**

**Text: 1 Chronicles 17:1-27**  
**"God's Covenant with David"**

Toni and I cannot park a bunch of used cars for sale in our front yard. Nor can we put up a sign advertising a business. (I wonder what such a sign might say: "Retired Pastor Available to Preach." Hmmm.)

Even though we own the land on which our home sits, an architectural review committee had to okay the plans for our house. All of these conditions, of course, are part of the covenant we signed when we bought this property. We agree to use the property in certain ways and agree not to use it in other certain ways.

The Bible is filled with covenants. The word appears almost three hundred times in the Scriptures.

The Old Testament word for covenant is *berith*. Some word scholars think the root meaning is "to pass between cut flesh," a way of sealing an agreement. (That leads to some interesting thought about God's covenant with us in the shed blood of Jesus.)

This week's study text is about a covenant God made with David.

Note that even the great King David

did not try to go on his spiritual journey alone. Believers are not lone rangers! 1 Chronicles 17:1 begins an account of David's consultation with the prophet Nathan.

Do you have a spiritual friend, a formation guide? Do you have someone whom you trust to help you hear the voice of God? Do others see that you have the gift of spiritual counsel?

Before making this important decision about building a temple (it seems like a no-brainer: of course, you ought to honor God with a temple), David listens to what Nathan has heard from God (1 Chronicles 17:4, 15). Nathan says, "God does not want you to build the temple" (1 Chronicles 17:4).

I have to ask myself: How willing am I to listen to someone who has heard a different message from God than I have been hearing?

In this covenant with David (as Nathan helps him understand it), God promises that David's son will build the temple (1 Chronicles 17:11-12). And Solomon does just that: he builds a temple (1 Kings 6:2). Solomon is the son of David and Bathsheba; Bathsheba is the woman David stole from another man by having that man killed in battle so David could marry her (2 Samuel 11).

Solomon is hardly the product of one of David's finer moments of morality, yet it is he whom God uses to fulfill the covenant God made with David.

As the hymn says, "You can use our weakness to magnify Your power." God will keep God's covenant, even if we mess up.

## What Someone Else Has Said

Frances Taylor Gench (*Hebrews and James*, Westminster, John Knox) has written: "For God (covenant) entails an irrevocable commitment to remember our sins no more."

## Prayer

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of covenant, of grace..."

**March 16, 2008**

**Text: 1 Chronicles 28:1-21**  
**"God Calls Solomon to Build the Temple"**

Our oldest grandson is a student at Virginia Commonwealth University.

See "Bible study," page 14

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## Making a Difference ....

The John A. Buckley Endowment Fund was established in September, 1999 to assist in ministries around the world where hope is needed. Through The Endowment grants have been given to the Mar Elias School in Galilee, ZOE ministry and scholarships have been given to clergy and laity enabling adults and youth to make spiritual pilgrimages around the world. Thank you for your continued support.

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## New hymnal being considered *continued from page 2*

local church members, pastors and musicians will be compiled and made available to help General Conference make this important decision as well as to the next hymnal revision committee," said the Rev. Karen Greenwaldt, top executive for GBOD.

Greenwaldt hopes that United Methodists will take advantage of this opportunity to have an impact on the contents of the next hymnal.

Published nearly 20 years ago, the current "United Methodist Hymnal" replaced the church's previous hymnal released in 1966.

GBOD will take two music-related petitions to General Conference 2008.

The first petition asks that a hymnal committee be appointed to develop a USA hymnal and present it for consideration and approval by the 2012 General Conference. Publication could come as early as 2013.

The second petition asks General Conference to approve a four-year study of the issues around developing an Africana hymnal and to appoint a committee to conduct the study and report back to the 2012 General Conference with recommendations.

The Africana hymnal would be a hymnal with music, ritual and worship resources for UM congregations and people of African descent.

This includes the long-established

African-American constituency of the church, but also other Africana persons in and coming to the Church from South and Central America, the

Caribbean and from African countries.

*\* Jeannette Pinkston is director of the GBOD Media Relations Office.*

## Recent appointment changes

- Rev. Lily Chou, pastor at Browning's-Smith Chapel, Goldsboro District, retired effective Oct. 1, 2007.
- Rev. Joseph (Jay) Winston is now serving Browning's-Smith Chapel, Goldsboro District.
- Rev. David Harrington (Greenville District: Farmville), is on leave of absence effective Sept. 1, 2007.
- Rev. Peg Witt, (New Bern: Retired) is serving Merrimon, New Bern District.
- Rev. John Mosley has moved from the Williston-Stacy Charge, New Bern District to Franklin Memorial.
- Rev. Alex Maultsby III is now serving Williston-Stacy, New Bern District.
- Rev. Robert Hill has moved from Franklin Memorial, New Bern District to Conway, Rocky Mount District.
- Rev. Lindsey Green, originally appointed to Conway (RM) has taken an appointment in the Pacific Northwest Conference and remains a member of the NC Conference.

### Births

WONG, Matthew Charles, son of Heather H. Wong (Raleigh District - Family Leave) and Phil was born December 14, 2007.

WILLIAMS, Margaret Sarah, daughter of Ben (Raleigh District: St. Marks) and Anna Williams was born December 19, 2007.

### Deaths

EPPS, Ralph (Elizabeth City: Retired) died January 3, 2008. The service of death and resurrection was held January 6 at Edenton UMC.

MILLER, Susan, wife of the Rev. James H. Miller, Jr. (Greenville District: Retired) died January 8. The funeral service was held January 11 at Westminster UMC in Kinston.

## conference CALENDAR

### February 2008

- 9 Youth Lay Speaker Training; Methodist Building, 10am-4pm (application required)
- 11-14 Probationary Interviews, Hayes Barton UMC, Raleigh
- 22-23 UMW Conference 39 & Under Event; First UMC, Graham

### March 2008

- 7 UMW Church Women United World Day of Prayer
- 8 Confirmation Celebration; Methodist Univ., 10am-2:30pm (registration required)
- 10-12 Stewardship Seminar, Trinity Center, Salter Path
- 10-13 Full Connection Interviews, St. Luke UMC, Goldsboro District
- 25-30 Global Vision (Orientation date: March 15)

For more information, visit [www.nccumc.org](http://www.nccumc.org) and click on "Calendar" at the top of the page.

## In memory of Howard Charles Wilkinson

Howard Charles Wilkinson died on December 26, 2007 at Croasdaile Farm Methodist Retirement Home, at the age of 89.

He was born near Katy, Texas, on June 23, 1918 and graduated from Katy High School in 1935 with honors. He worked on his father's ranch for a year before entering Southwestern University in 1936, where he graduated in 1939 with honors.

That fall he enrolled at Duke University Divinity School, from which he graduated with honors in 1942, receiving the Master of Divinity degree. In 2002, he received the distinguished honor of being chosen as "Alumnus of the Year 2002" from the Duke University Divinity School, during the Duke Convocation.

He joined the Western NC Methodist Conference in 1942 and served 54 years. Between 1942 and 1996, he served at: First Methodist Church, Charlotte; Haywood St., Asheville; First Methodist, Lexington; Central

Methodist, Shelby; Chaplain to Duke University, Minister in Charge of the Duke University Chapel, and Director of Religious Activities; President of Greensboro College; Hawthorne Lane, Charlotte; and Jamestown, Jamestown.

In 1954, he was a member of a Methodist evangelistic team which preached throughout the Republic of Cuba. While he was minister of Duke, he organized and headed a ten-year project in the eastern jungles of Nicaragua, in which Duke students carried out health and spiritual missions in the summers. For two summers, he organized and sent teams of Duke students to work with the Aymara Indians on the Altiplano of Bolivia.

In 1963 Southwestern University conferred upon him the Doctor of Divinity degree. He has been a guest preacher at more than forty universities and colleges across the nation. He was the founding chairman of the million-dollar Royce and Jane Reynolds Foundation, which is related to the Western NC Methodist Conference.

In 1971 he was given one of only 600 color copies of the Codex Vaticanus

(the oldest complete copy of the New Testament) which he gave to the Rare Book Room of the Duke Library.

In 1979, he was cited in "Gothic Sound for a Neo-Gothic Chapel of Duke University" for exceptionally valuable work in preparing the Duke University Chapel for the installation of the mighty Flentrop pipe organ.

He was keenly interested in Christian evangelism, and wherever he served, he was instrumental in bringing many new members into the church. His primary interest was to help people gain a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

He contributed chapters in eight books, and published almost a hundred articles in journals and magazines.

An address he delivered to the Charlotte Executives Club in 1963 entitled, "How Separate Should Government and God Be," was reprinted in national magazines and three books, and listed in the 1966 Speech Index as one of the most noteworthy speeches in the history of the world.

Senator Sam Ervin placed one of Dr. Wilkinson's Chapel sermons in the Congressional Record in 1962. In 1966

the Freedoms Foundation awarded him the George Washington Honor Medal for one of his sermons.

A memorial service was conducted on December 31 at the Few Chapel at Croasdaile Village by Rev. Michael Jordan. A brief service was also held that day at the columbarium of First United Methodist Church in Lexington.

He is survived by his wife, Juanita, whom he married on June 24, 1947; his four children; Scott Wilkinson, of Oakland, CA, Melinda Wilkinson, of Raleigh, NC, Barbara and Len Carlson, of Atlanta, GA and Fleeta Wilkinson and Claude Chauvigne of Chapel Hill, NC. Also surviving is his granddaughter, Christina Carlson of Atlanta, GA.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Duke University Chapel at the following address: Lucy Worth, Friends of Duke Chapel, Box 90974, Durham, NC 27708-0974. Please direct that they be added to the Howard C. Wilkinson Chapel Endowment.



# March adult Bible study *continued from page 12*

He enjoys reminding me that VCU toppled Duke in last year's NCAA men's basketball tournament.

Our son is a St. Louis Cardinals fan, having inherited that passion for Red Birds from me.

Our middle grandson has his academic eye on Purdue University and enjoys wearing a Boilermaker jacket.

Grandson Three (still in kindergarten) already talks about going to the College of William and Mary.

Mercy! How diverse can one family be! One might think that the whole crowd would be loyal Dukies, proudly Blue Devils. One might think the whole crowd would love to see Albert Pujols do wonderful things for St. Louis baseball.

One might think so, but one would be wrong!

Family traditions and family advice and family commitments sometimes slip a bit in transition.

In this Palm Sunday study, David is trying to pass on to his son Solomon all that God has in mind for the building of the temple (1 Chronicles 28:9-10).

In some of the verses not printed in the student book, David gets specific as to how the work is to be done (1 Chronicles 28:11-19), even how much items are to weigh. David wants Solomon, his son, to accomplish what God wants done. He assures Solomon that God is with him on this project (1 Chronicles 28:20).

From other places in the Bible (1 Kings 6:2, for example), we know

that Solomon did build the temple. He had seventy thousand laborers and eighty thousand stonecutters and three thousand three hundred supervisors for the task (1 Kings 5:15-16). Now that is taking seriously a father's advice!

In this lesson we see again that God's people do not ordinarily work in isolation.

Solomon is in connection with his father, David (1 Chronicles 28:20). All kinds of volunteers will help out on the temple building project (1 Chronicles 28:21).

Those with leadership positions will join in the task (28:21). The priests and religious principals will be part of the team (28:21). What a diverse group! Blue Devils and Boilermakers and Cardinals all working together!

That is what jumps out at me in these verses: diversity and differences are not intended to be barriers to the mission of God's people.

## What Someone Else Has Said

William Sloan Coffin is quoted as saying: "We can build a community out of seekers of truth, but not out of possessors of truth" (William Martin, editor, *The Best Liberal Quotes Ever*, Sourcebooks, Inc.).

## Prayer

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "You call us together..."

## March 23, 2008

### Text: 2 Chronicles 6; Luke 24 "Fulfillment of God's Promise"

This Easter Sunday lesson is about promises: (a) God's faithfulness in keeping the promise to be with Solomon through the building of the temple and (b) God's faithfulness in sending the resurrection power of Jesus to the disciples.

The Old Testament word translated "promise" literally means "a word." God's word is as good as a promise! If God has said it, count on it!

The New Testament word translated "promise" literally means "an announcement." God's announcement is as good as a promise! If God has announced it, count on it!

Two children were arguing about which one had more money. "I have five cents!" said one as she held out a nickel. "That's nothing," the other countered. "I have seven cents" as he held out two pennies. "You don't have seven cents," said the first child. "You only have two cents."

The second child answered, "I do so have seven cents (as he held out his two pennies) because my daddy promised to give me a nickel when he gets home!"

Claim God's promises because God makes good on God's promises.

The text from 2 Chronicles 6 explores the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem. The building is proof that God has kept God's promise to David and to David's son Solomon.

The text from Luke explores the resurrection of Jesus. His living presence is proof that God has kept God's promise to do "all the prophets have declared" (Luke 24:25).

God's fulfillment of promises does not always look the same. In the case of the temple, a generation of people saw the slow and steady work of the construction of the house of God. It took a long time and could be seen developing.

In the case of the resurrection of Jesus, even some of those who witnessed the living Lord did not know whom they were seeing (Luke 24:16). There was little expectancy that Jesus would be seen again, but here he was (Luke 24:31).

Whether God's work is obvious or more nearly hidden, we can be assured that God is at work to make good on God's promises. No wonder Solomon began the dedication of the temple with a prayer of thanksgiving (2 Chronicles 6:14). No wonder the disciples (after seeing the risen Lord) returned to the temple to praise God (Luke 6:52-3).

## What Someone Else Has Said

In *Eucharist and Eschatology* (Oxford University Press), Geoffrey Wainwright describes the insights of Gerhard von Rad: "According to von Rad, the characteristic (biblical) pattern of promise and fulfillment... is this: a divine promise is made, some future action of God supervenes in first fulfillment of the promise, and this new deed itself becomes a new promise for a future and greater fulfillment."

## Prayer

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Faithful God of promises..."

## March 30, 2008

### Text: 2 Chronicles 34 "Josiah Renews the Covenant"

Josiah was the sixteenth king of Judah. His reign began almost three hundred years after Solomon, so the Hebrew people had long since divided into two kingdoms (northern—Israel and southern—Judah) and had had nearly three centuries to fall away from the spiritual high of the construction of the temple.

Mountain-top experiences can be like that: the great emotional joy and commitment can be slowly eroded by

time and casual faith. This is what had happened in Judah, even to the point of the temple falling into disrepair.

Josiah is seen as the hero of this story and well he might be. It is he who called the people back to reformation, recovery of their spiritual heritage (2 Chronicles 34:32-33).

But I think there are some unsung heroes and heroines in this account.

What about Hilkiah, the priest who recognized something of value in the newly found documents (2 Chronicles 34:15)?

What about Shaphan, the king's administrative assistant, who had the courage to read aloud to the king a text that showed that the king's nation was corrupt (34:18)?

What about Huldah, a woman prophet who spoke hard words about what would happen to the kingdom if it continued to be unfaithful (34:24)?

It is no small task to fly in the face of "what everybody knows to be true." The people of Judah were content with their style of life, but Hilkiah, Shaphan, and Huldah dared to challenge it.

It turns out that what everyone seemed to think was okay with God was not okay with God (34:25).

And at first it was not the king who saw the problem, but it was these "little people" — a priest in a time when religion was diminished, a secretary on the rungs of a hierarchical system, and a woman called to be a prophet in a time when male dominance was taken for granted.

We can celebrate that King Josiah moved his people back to greater faithfulness, but to give all the credit to the good king may be a way of our excusing ourselves.

Without the unsung heroes and heroines—people more or less like us—this reformation never would have happened.

Has God laid a reformation on your heart?

## What Someone Else Has Said

In *Famous Conversions* (Hugh T. Kerr and John M. Mulder, eds., Eerdmans Publishing), Dag Hammarskjöld is quoted as praying: "Give me a pure heart—that I may see Thee, a humble heart—that I may hear Thee, a heart of love—that I may serve Thee, a heart of faith—that I may abide in Thee."

## Prayer

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of generations before me, help me to find the truth You revealed to them. God of this time and place, help me to know Your will for this day. God of a good tomorrow, help me to be open to become what You would have me be and do in a day yet to be..."

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# around the CONFERENCE



## Westover UMC - Celebrating anniversaries

Westover UMC, in the Raleigh District, recently had the privilege of celebrating noteworthy anniversaries with two couples. Each couple, Harold and Doris Price (front) and Earl and Lydia Waters (back) celebrated 65 years of marriage in 2007.



## Chestnut Street UMC - Christmas pageant

On Christmas Eve, Chestnut Street UMC celebrated Communion with an "on the spot" Christmas Pageant. Rather than having rehearsals before hand, the children decided which character they wanted to be and dressed accordingly. As the Rev. Jimmie Tatum, Chestnut Street pastor, read the story from Luke, the children came forward to their places.



## Tabernacle UMC - New Chrismon tree

Members and friends of Tabernacle UMC, Townsville (Durham District), put a lot of hard work and love into making a new Chrismon Tree during 2007. On the 60-foot tree, completed for the First Sunday in Advent, were 33 different ornaments. A special service was held to explain the meanings of the different ornaments to the congregation which averages 50 in worship each Sunday.

RIGHT: Celebrating the Cooke Endowment's creation are: (L-R): Bill Wise; Linda Bayless, Church Council chair; Ann Wise; Rev. Randy Blanchard; Lynn James of UMF; Doug Trask, Fellowship UMC treasurer; & Larry Hinson, Trustees chair. Photo by Monty Livingston.



## Cooke Endowment created to support Fellowship UMC

By Lynn James \*

Recently, Ann Wise and her husband Bill sought a way to celebrate the lives of Ann's parents, Alvin and Dot Cooke. The Cookes had died, leaving a bequest to their daughter from their estate.

"My parents, Alvin and Dot Cooke, loved their church, Fellowship United Methodist Church, so very much, and we wanted to do something to honor their love and to keep their memory alive in the church far into the future," said Wise.

"They did so many loving things for the church and for so many others throughout their lives that something special needed to be created that would reflect that love and help keep their memory alive in the lives of others in such a special way," she added.

The question of "something special" was clearly answered during a conversation with the Rev. Randy Blanchard, pastor at Fellowship UMC in Hamlet.

Ann and Bill Wise decided that the best way to celebrate her parents' love for their church was to create a gift that would keep on giving.

Thus, the bequest became a Permanent Endowment to benefit Fellowship UMC with United Methodist Foundation as trustee.

The church will receive distributions from the Cooke Memorial Endowment to provide funds for the care and upkeep of the church parsonage and sanctuary for years to come.

The principal of the gift will remain intact as the endowment grows through the socially-responsible investment management offered by the Foundation.

"Through their establishment of this endowment, Ann and Bill Wise honor the Christian work of Ann's parents, demonstrate love for their Christian family and make visible the perpetual care they wish to bestow upon the parsonage family. This is a choice they make out of the blessings God has given them. When we choose to honor, love and care for others, we multiply God's blessings, and, through our ordinary natural means, elevate them to the level of the miraculous," said Blanchard.

\* Lynn James is executive director of United Methodist Foundation, Inc.



The Western NC Conference chapter of the Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts (FUMMWA) will be sponsoring its 9th Annual Children's Choir Festival on Saturday March 1, 2008. The Festival will be held at Matthews UMC just outside of Charlotte, NC. This year's clinician is the well respected Mr. Tom Shelton. All children in grades 3 through unchanged voice are invited to participate. Registration information, a brochure with more information, and the music selections to be performed can be obtained by emailing Carrie Wright, chapter president [cwright@comporium.net](mailto:cwright@comporium.net) or on our website [www.wncfummwa.org](http://www.wncfummwa.org)

### "Around the Conference"

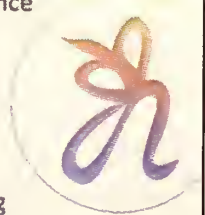
items can be submitted to [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org). The deadline is the 5th day of the month. All articles and photos subject to editing. Photographs or art should be recorded in the largest size and highest resolution possible and sent in JPG or TIFF formats.

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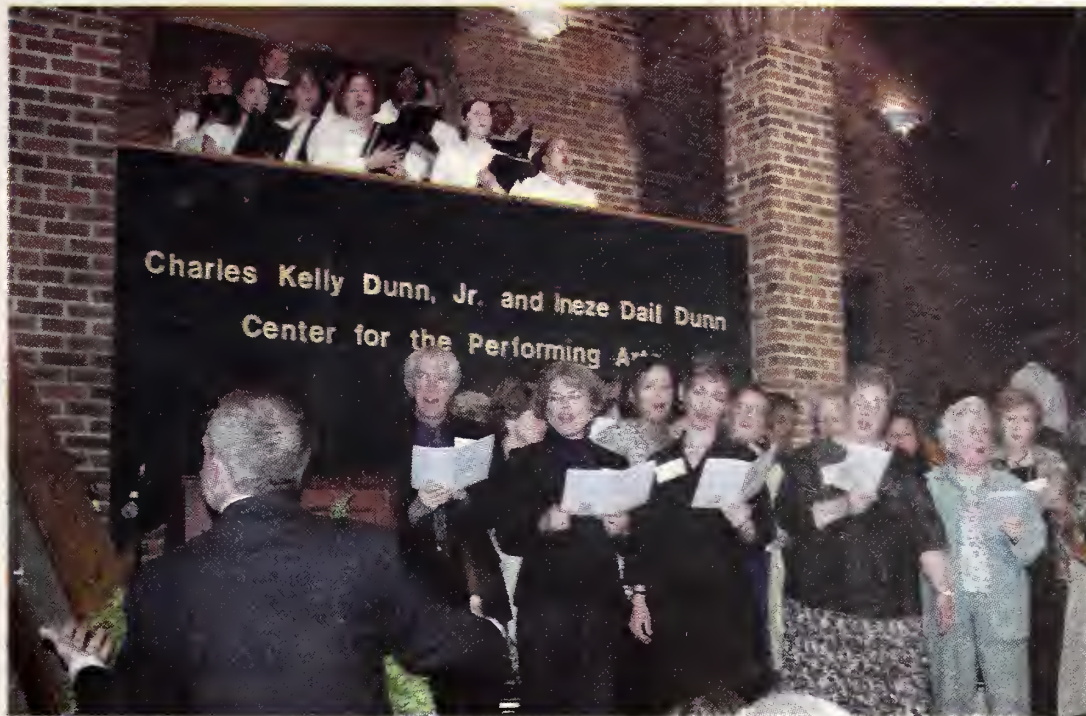
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Gene Heavner (lower left) conducted The Wesleyan Singers (on the balcony) as they sang the Alma Mater with alumni (on the lower level) during homecoming dinner at the Dunn Center.

The Wesleyan Singers perform a variety of musical styles, from traditional to more contemporary. They participate in many campus functions as well as in the local community. NCWC also has a Gospel Choir which offers a way for students to express their faith through song.



## Long Memorial UMC helps get new books to students

As part of the "Hand in Hand" initiative, Long Memorial UMC in Roxboro, Communities In Schools of North Carolina (CISNC), and First Book have teamed up to provide new, first quality books to South Elementary School in Person County.

CIS has been offering technical assistance and training to a partnership that has been initiated between Long Memorial and South Elementary School.

Communities In Schools is a leading community-based organization helping children succeed in school and prepare for life. There are 39 local operational affiliates in North Carolina serving over 400 schools and other sites.

First Book is a nonprofit organization with a mission to give new books to children who might not otherwise have an opportunity to read and own their first new books.

Through a web of local Advisory Boards, the First Book National Book Bank, and the First Book Marketplace, the organization provides an ongoing supply of new books to children participating in community-based

## Gift for choral music scholarships will expand NC Wesleyan's program

By Susan Best \*

The choral music program at North Carolina Wesleyan College in Rocky Mount received an anonymous gift of \$500,000 in January to be used for choral music scholarships and administrative costs of the program.

Each year for five years, \$100,000 will be available for choral music, with 80 percent allocated for student scholarships and the remainder for the

program's administrative costs.

The gift will enable Wesleyan to strengthen its choral music program, which already benefits the campus and the surrounding community, including area churches.

Wesleyan's choir, known as The Wesleyan Singers, is currently composed of 15 men and women. They recently performed at First UMC, Rocky Mount and at First Presbyterian Church, Rocky Mount where they will perform again,

along with the church choir, on Palm Sunday.

"This is a wonderful gift, and the timing of it couldn't have been better," said Dr. Ian Newbould, Wesleyan president. "The gift corresponds with Wesleyan's heightened emphasis upon excellence. As we continually elevate our standards for admission, this gift will make it possible for us to attract

See "Gift made" page 3

See "Books for students," page 2

## Duke Endowment gives \$8.2 million in grants to NC Conference churches

The Rural Church Division of The Duke Endowment recently approved \$8.2 million in grants for the following churches and organizations within the North Carolina Conference:

### Burlington District:

- Burlington District Office to establish a district Christian Educator intern position, to establish a multi-church senior ministry, and to assist the district in the Rural Communities in Transition Initiative;
- Cedar Grove UMC to create a

community garden to teach land stewardship;

- Evergreen UMC to expand a food pantry;
- Leasburg UMC to support an elder program and to upgrade the playground;
- New Sharon UMC to support isolated seniors and their caregivers;
- Saxapahaw UMC to establish a thrift store;
- Union Grove UMC to establish an after-school and summer program.

### Durham District:

- Durham District to develop a Latino/Hispanic ministry;
- Hargrove Chapel UMC for an after-school center;
- Mount Zion UMC to assist with the construction of a fellowship hall and classrooms;
- Pleasant Green UMC to expand the after-school and summer programs and to support a health and wholeness ministry;
- Rougemont UMC to support

See "Rural Church Division," page 4

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## Books for students from page 1

mentoring, tutoring, and family literacy programs.

In late January, South Elementary School received over 1,900 new books from the CIS/First Book collaboration, all of which are appropriate for elementary school age children.

These books, with the assistance of teachers, Long Memorial UMC tutors, and other school volunteers, will make their way into the hands and homes of students who will most benefit from this special encouragement to read.

The "Hand in Hand" initiative began in 1999 as a collaborative one between the NC Conference UMC, the Western NC Conference UMC, The Methodist Homes for Children, The Duke Endowment, and Communities In Schools of North Carolina (CIS).

As this ministry continued to grow, CIS realized the need to duplicate it across all denominations, and in 2007 launched a "Bridges of Faith" program by which CIS provides all training and support for "Hand in Hand" projects.



In celebration of National Mentor Month, 43 volunteers working at South Elementary School, including 31 volunteers in the "Hand in Hand" program at Long Memorial UMC, were invited to a celebration dinner. The dinner, which was served in the Harris Fellowship Hall of Long Memorial, was catered by the youth of the church. After the meal, the South Elementary tutors were presented new books that to pass on to the students they mentor. The Rev. Dr. George W. Johnson was guest speaker. The books were provided by First Book National Book Bank, working together with CIS to provide new books to children participating in community-based mentoring, tutoring and family literacy programs.

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**"Building Faithful Financial Partnerships"**



(L-R) Jim and Troy Kenny of Wilmington received a MHC 2008 Guardian Angel Award from MHC President and CEO, Bruce Stanley.

## 11th annual MHC gala supports services for children, youth, families

By Enuma C. Okoro \*

A record 500 guests attended "A Winter's Tale," the 11th annual charity gala of the Methodist Home for Children raised \$200,000, more than at any previous gala, to support MHC's mission to nurture children, youth, and families.

Amanda Lamb, WRAL-TV crime reporter and author, was the evening's keynote speaker during the January 26 event held at the North Ridge Country Club in Raleigh.

Lamb spoke about the importance of deeply investing in the lives of marginalized and vulnerable children and youth so that their future successes come as no surprise.

Her reflections highlighted the heartwarming and difficult truths she learned about parenting from raising her own two children.

As a crime beat reporter, Lamb reminded listeners that there is always a deeper and wider story that relates to unhealthy family systems and systemic injustices behind most every incident of juvenile crime.

Part of the evening's program

was devoted to inducting four new members into Methodist Home for Children's Guardian Angel Society which recognizes those who, through their service and support, have made extraordinary commitments to the children and families served by MHC.

Edenton Street United Methodist Church, Kathryn Hodges of Tarboro, Troy and Jim Kenny of Wilmington, and Laurie and Sam Sugg of Raleigh were honored at the event.

"As more and more people come to understand the good work of Methodist Home for Children and the need for its services, they want to support the agency. Therefore, this important event becomes ever more successful," said Bruce Stanley, MHC president/CEO, reflecting on the evening and its history.

The gala was co-chaired by Kelly and Michael Clay and Melanie and Ken Crockett with the Golden Corral Corporation serving, once again, as the lead sponsor, joined this year by House of Raeford Farms, Inc.

\* Enuma C. Okoro is MHC director of communications.

## "Religion in an Age of Science" lecture coming March 10

Methodist University in Fayetteville will host the eighth annual lectureship on Religion in an Age of Science.

This year's event is scheduled for Monday, March 10, at 11:00am in Yarborough Auditorium of the Clark Building.

The lecturer is Margaret Wertheim, an internationally noted science writer and commentator.

Her topic will be: "On Space and

Spirit: God, Physics, and the Culture Wars." The event is open to the public with no cost of admission.

Wertheim has lectured at colleges and universities around the world, has written numerous scholarly and popular articles and books, and has produced a dozen television programs and interactive videos seeking to bridge the gap between the sciences and religion.



# U.N. Foundation invites UMC to apply for global health initiative grant

UMNS — The United Methodist Church has been invited by the United Nations Foundation to apply for up to \$5 million to underwrite a campaign to strengthen its global health ministries.

The fundraising, education and outreach campaign would aim to raise \$100 million over three years and especially would support the church's efforts to eradicate malaria and other diseases of poverty in Africa.

Bishop Janice Riggle Huie, president of the United Methodist Council of Bishops, received the invitation in mid-January from the United Nations Foundation, which is helping to facilitate the grant process.

Underwriting support was being provided by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

## UMC grant proposal

The invitation to apply for the grant represents "an extraordinary opportunity" for the people of The United Methodist Church, said Elizabeth Gore, executive director of partnership alliances for the U.N. Foundation.

"The immediate success of Nothing But Nets has built momentum among the people of the church in support of eliminating malaria," Gore wrote in the letter to Huie. "It is our goal to work in partnership...to save lives and inspire the launch of an inspirational movement within the church."

Bishop Felton E. May, interim chief executive of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries said many details must be worked out regarding the grant proposal, operating the campaign, and ministries that will be supported by the campaign.

## Collaborating for global health

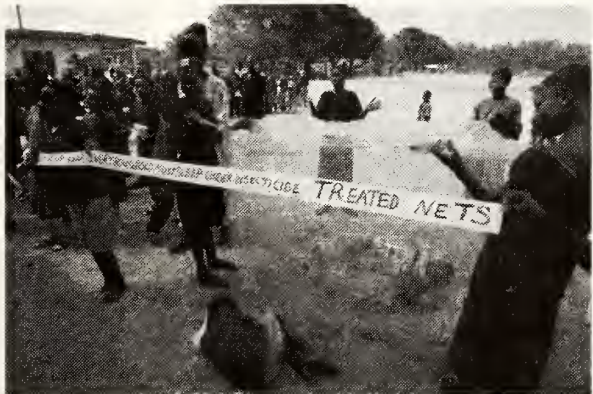
The United Methodist Church has long been a key player in the fight against malaria and other diseases of poverty, having operated hospitals, clinics, schools and mission centers across Africa for more than 160 years.

In recent years, the denomination has increasingly sought ways to partner with other organizations — particularly in its global health initiatives — to leverage funding and gain greater access to networks and knowledge that can contribute to substantive global change.

Partnering organizations have

welcomed the church's on-ground infrastructure already in place to aid vulnerable people.

In 2006, the people of The United Methodist Church joined with the United Nations Foundation, Sports Illustrated and NBA Cares to become one of the founding partners of Nothing But Nets, a grassroots effort to prevent malaria in Africa through the purchase and distribution of insecticide-treated mosquito nets. Over one million African children die from malaria yearly



School children in Lekki, Nigeria, perform a skit promoting the effectiveness of mosquito nets to prevent malaria. UMNS file photo by Mike DuBose.

## Malaria Forum

Last October in Seattle, The United Methodist Church was the only faith group represented at the Gates Foundation's Malaria Forum.

Both May and the Rev. Larry Hollon, chief executive of United Methodist Communications, participated in the forum that brought together more than 300 scientists, physicians, public health leaders and top government officials from across the globe.

Global health is one of four areas of focus identified by the denomination as part of its long-term vision. "Our goal is to ultimately create conditions for better health for people all over the world," said Hollon.

"Today, the Lord is calling us to tackle the diseases of poverty — those plagues that must and can be controlled. Such work is our God-given responsibility," said May.

The church also has a long history in education, advocacy, medical ministries and creating public awareness of health issues including HIV/AIDS, another of the diseases of poverty.

*This story is based in part on a joint news release issued by UM Communications and the UM Board of Global Ministries.*

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## Gift made to NC Wesleyan for choral scholarships from pg. 1

students with choral abilities."

"The College also looks forward to sharing the benefits of the choral music program through public performances much like those that were popular in times past, when the choir offered something that appealed to all members of an audience," Newbould said. "Wesleyan's Dunn Center for the Performing Arts is an ideal place for a large choral group to practice and perform."

Wesleyan students have been involved in choral music since the College opened in 1960.

The first teaching faculty member hired was Dr. William G. Sasser, who served as professor of music and head of the Music Department until his retirement in 1985. Sasser formed and led The Wesleyan Singers, the school's first student organization.

Four years ago, Wesleyan's Gospel Choir placed first in the Battle of High School and College Choirs, competing against larger schools including East Carolina and Duke Universities.

"We are excited that Wesleyan has

received this generous and thoughtful gift," Newbould said. "We believe that it will benefit not only the Wesleyan campus and the local community but all of eastern North Carolina."

For the past two years, Wesleyan's choir has been under the direction of Gene Heavner, an experienced musician who also recruits students for The Wesleyan Singers.

"As a choral director, ...you have to go out there and get students, and this scholarship will make it much, much easier. It gives us a very strong advantage," Heavner said.

"I plan on churches being an outlet for recruitment," he said. "Because of this gift, we have the ability to offer scholarships to many new people. And the best part for students is they can major in whatever they want to, so long as they're in the choir."

Students must audition for a choral scholarship, Heavner said, but the choirs are open to all Wesleyan students who enjoy singing.

*\* Susan Best is director of public relations at NC Wesleyan College.*

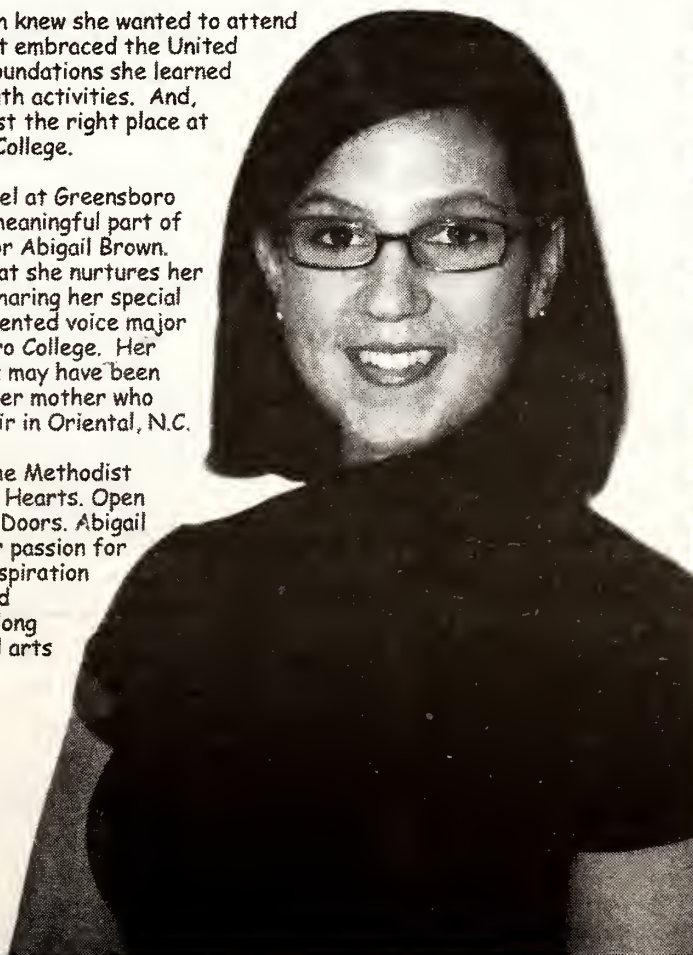
# Abigail

Hometown: Oriental, N.C.

Abigail Brown knew she wanted to attend a college that embraced the United Methodist foundations she learned from her youth activities. And, she found just the right place at Greensboro College.

Weekly Chapel at Greensboro College is a meaningful part of each week for Abigail Brown. It is here that she nurtures her faith while sharing her special gifts as a talented voice major at Greensboro College. Her love of music may have been inspired by her mother who directed choir in Oriental, N.C.

Embracing the Methodist theme, Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors. Abigail combines her passion for music, the inspiration of church and fellowship, along with a liberal arts education.



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# Rural Church Division grants to NC Conference churches *from page 1*

an outreach ministry for the homeless.

## Elizabeth City District:

- All God's Children UMC to create a nutritional and emotional wellness program for the elderly and to create programs that promote and foster leadership skills in children;
- Bethany: Wanchese UMC to support Dare Respite Care;
- Buxton UMC to enhance the existing preschool program;
- Colington UMC to build additional classrooms;
- Currituck UMC to build safe playgrounds in the community, to support a 10-week all-day summer camp, and to expand the curriculum at the day care center to include Spanish;
- Duck UMC to expand a food ministry for low-income children;
- Hertford UMC to assist with the construction of ramps and accessible restrooms;
- Moyock UMC to support the before and after-school programs, preschool, and child care programs and for emergency aid;
- Pilmoor Memorial UMC to expand and relocate the child care program and to establish an after-school program;
- Sharon UMC to enlarge the computer lab facility;
- Trinity UMC (South Mills) to renovate the church entrance.

## Fayetteville District:

- Fayetteville District Office to provide district parish nursing;
- Parker's Grove UMC to establish an after-school program;
- Salem UMC to renovate the family life center, to make upgrades to the after-school program, to make upgrades to the preschool and child care programs, and to provide transportation for the

after-school program;

- Solid Rock UMC to support child care and the preschool, including out-of-school care, to establish a second child care campus, and to establish a food pantry;
- Union UMC to establish an after-school and summer program.

## Goldsboro District:

- Bethel UMC to assist in the construction of a new fellowship hall and education building;
- Fremont UMC to assist with emergency recovery due to storm flooding;
- Goldsboro District Office to establish an older adult ministry that provides health screenings, and social activities and to support a district-wide health program;
- Pine Forest UMC to provide accessibility and renovate the education building;
- Rose Hill UMC to provide transportation for existing Rose Hill UMC programs;
- Salem UMC to renovate the fellowship hall.

## Greenville District:

- Aurora UMC to establish a teen center for Aurora-area teenagers;
- Greenville District to support the Latino/Hispanic ministry;
- Hookerton UMC to renovate the sanctuary;
- Sharon UMC to establish an after-school program with a focus on nutrition and exercise;
- Soule UMC to renovate the sanctuary.

## New Bern District:

- Faith Harbor UMC to assist with construction of a new church;
- New Bern District to expand the EMBRACE Latino ministry;
- Oriental UMC to expand an older adult ministry.

## Raleigh District:

- Bunn UMC to enhance the child care program with an outdoor learning center;
- Christ Community UMC to establish a Latino/Hispanic ministry program;
- Raleigh District to improve effectiveness among the District's 16 rural churches.

## Rockingham District:

- Hickory Grove UMC to provide outreach ministries within the

Native American community;

- New Hope UMC to assist with the construction of a new fellowship hall and classrooms;
- Piney Grove UMC to build a new sanctuary and education building;
- Pleasant Grove UMC for construction of accessible bathrooms and sanctuary renovations;
- Regan UMC to establish a Home Store to provide low-priced used items which will support the Roberson County Church and Community Center;
- Rockingham District to produce a book on the Lumbee Native Americans;
- Rockingham District Native American Cooperative Ministry for a coordinator for the Cooperative Ministry;
- Sandy Grove UMC to improve the child care program;
- Sandy Plains UMC to renovate fellowship hall and kitchen and to improve the child care program.

## Rocky Mount District:

- Bailey UMC to help renovate the fellowship hall;
- Evansdale UMC to assist with the construction of a fellowship hall with classrooms;
- Halifax UMC to build a fellowship hall, kitchen, and classrooms;
- La Estrella Resplandeciente to establish a comprehensive Latino/Hispanic ministry;
- Rocky Mount District to assist with renovations at La Estrella Resplandeciente UMC and support Latino/Hispanic ministry;
- Pleasant Grove UMC to assist with construction of a new fellowship hall;
- Sandy Cross UMC to provide playground equipment for the church and community.

## Sanford District:

- Chatham UMC to assist with the construction of a fellowship hall and classrooms;
- Goldston UMC to establish a Latino/Hispanic ministry and to outfit two trailers with equipment to be used in disaster response;
- McQueen Chapel UMC to assist with the construction of a multi-purpose building;
- Sanford Circuit Charge to provide after-school tutoring at three churches and to provide food pantries, soup kitchens, and ministries to those in need;
- Sanford District to establish Latino/Hispanic ministry and the Sanford District Circles of Hispanic Ministries.

## Wilmington District:

- Bethel UMC to assist in the construction of a new fellowship hall and classrooms;
- Old Dock UMC to assist with the construction of a fellowship hall;
- Seaside UMC to support the preschool program;
- Wilmington District to create a program to support Latino/Hispanic assimilation within the community and churches.

## NC Annual Conference:

- To provide volunteer labor and financial support for local Habitat for Humanity housing projects with the assistance of Faithworks and rural UM congregations;
- To assist the United Methodist Foundation, Inc. with a demonstration project for planned giving education in rural churches;
- To strengthen rural churches in the Conference through the Town and Country Committee;
- To strengthen the office of Ethnic Minority churches in the conference;
- To expand the Latino/Hispanic ministry within the conference;
- To assist the Rural Advancement Foundation, Inc. in educating churches about the challenges and opportunities of rural ministry;
- To provide information technology upgrades to support REACH, a program to assist rural UM churches with emergency preparedness;
- To support Living the Word, a leadership training program;
- To provide a consultant to evaluate child care programs in rural churches;
- To assist Society of St. Andrew in aiding church hunger programs;
- To assist rural UM churches with accessibility projects;
- To provide consultation services for the development and program needs of rural UM churches;
- To support the position of Christian Educator for African-American churches;
- To support Neighbor to Neighbor, a program using volunteers to repair homes;
- To implement Stop Hunger Now's Operation Sharehouse Program, a Methodist-based hunger prevention program;
- To provide pensions to retired ministers and widows and dependent children of deceased ministers.

*Compiled by LeeAnne Thornton, administrative assistant to the Conference Communications office, from reports by The Duke Endowment.*

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# Peace conference at Lake Junaluska asks: “Where is the church’s voice?”

**“If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.” Luke 19:41**

By Kathy L. Gilbert\*

UMNS—Seasoned peacemakers, social justice advocates and seminary students spent three days at a peace conference grappling with the question: “How can The United Methodist Church find its voice in a world of violence?” Several from the NC Conference Commission on Church and Society participated in the event.

The Rev. Peter Storey, a renowned peace advocate and the former Methodist bishop of South Africa, set the tone for the three-day gathering as he welcomed 400 participants to “the conference of impossible things.”

Storey began the opening session of the 2008 Lake Junaluska Peace Conference by asking participants to think about what God they serve.

“If your God is the God of Jesus, he said, any response to violence must be examined through the cross.

“Why our silence? Why no clear, bold challenge? Why is the way that leads to peace still apparently hidden from our sight when we hang crosses all over the place?”

The event featured panel discussions, workshops and worship that focused on the peace of Jesus Christ.

Speakers included the Rev. Richard Hays and Bishop Ken Carder, professors at Duke Divinity School; Jan Love, dean of the Candler School of Theology; Jim Winkler, top executive of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society; and Celeste Zappala, a Gold Star Mother who lost a son in the Iraq conflict.

A grassroots group of peace advocates headed by 95-year-old Rev. Wright Spears started dreaming of an annual peace conference to examine why the church is too often silent in a world of violence.

The group is planning for 10 more years of peace conferences and already has started working on next year’s schedule, Spears said.

“Peace must come in this world,” Spears said. “The alternative is unthinkable...annihilation, death for all creation.” Spears, former president of Columbia College and a retired United Methodist pastor, sat on the front row of every session of the conference.

“We are all God’s children; we ought to have no enemies in this world,” he said.

## Blessed are the peacemakers

Hays said followers of Jesus are called to put away their swords. From Matthew to Revelation, he said, the New Testament is a consistent witness against violence.

“In a world torn by violence, the distinctive vocation of Jesus followers is to renounce violence and to seek where there is strife to make peace,” said Hays.

“No other issue is more urgent for our time, but on hardly any other issue has the church so massively failed to embody the promise of the Gospel.”

Using scriptures from Luke, Romans, Matthew, Hebrews, Revelation, Ephesians and 2 Corinthians, Hays laid a biblical foundation for peacemaking.

“Peacemaking is not merely an option or political preference; it is a matter that stands at the heart of the Gospel,” he said.

In her address, Love asked, “What would it mean for us as Christians to leave our guns literally and figuratively at the gate?”

“Our willingness to wage war with and perpetrate violence against each other is a shameful counter-witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ,” she said.

“It is a horrific betrayal of the Gospel of grace, peace and mercy we claim as the body of Christ.”

“It is a horrific betrayal of the Gospel of grace, peace and mercy we claim as the body of Christ.”

## Greatest challenges

“We are concerned about the silence of the church on major issues confronting the world,” said Carder.

“The church has a long history of silence...and of whispering when it should have shouted and sometimes shouting when it should have whispered.”

Moderating a panel discussion at the end of the conference, Carder asked Storey, Love and Winkler to sum up the significant challenges facing The United Methodist Church in the United States.

Storey suggested every congregation take a two-year sabbatical from “programs.”

Instead, he encouraged churches to engage in Bible study, enter into deep Christian conferencing, pray deeply and humbly, and share together around four issues:

1. The flag and altar,
2. Wealth and poverty,
3. Violence and nonviolence,
4. Inclusion and exclusion.

“The flag has to come out of the sanctuary—not because we aren’t patriotic but because that is God’s house and that is Caesar’s flag....We are confusing the two very badly and wrapping our theology in red, white and blue,” said Storey.

Violence and nonviolence are profound issues for the United States “one of the most violent societies in the world,” he said.

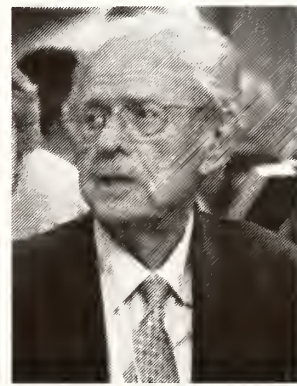
“More people have been killed in riots in this country than all the wars you have fought.”

Love said United Methodists need to remember to love God with “all our minds.”

“I challenge my students at Candler not to have mindless church, mindless liturgies, mindless meetings,” she said. “Our church is not doing a very good job of supporting the education of our pastors and laity.”

“One of our biggest challenges in the years ahead is to face up to the fear and panic over membership loss,” Winkler said.

“We cannot let ourselves get consumed by that. If we think the bottom line is more bottoms in the pews, then we will miss the point. We need to understand what is really going on in the world and get ourselves on God’s side.”



The Rev. Wright Spears, 95, dreamed of an annual peace conference to examine why the church remains silent in a world of violence.

## Key issue of the day

State Senator Joe Sam Queen (NC Senate District 47) attended all three days of the conference because “there is no question in my mind that peace and justice are the most important issues of our time.”

Queen, a member of First United Methodist Church, Waynesville said he was excited about the

grassroots gathering of lay and clergy and young people from seminaries.

“We need to find our voice. We have been stunned by 9/11,” said Queen.

“Our churches, our communities and our politicians need to find our voice because the future is not a war on terror; it is the reign of peace.”

\* Kathy Gilbert is a UMNS news writer based in Nashville, Tenn.



“Welcome to the conference of impossible things,” said the Rev. Peter Storey in his opening address.



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## Nominations open for conference committees

Clergy and local church members in the North Carolina Conference have until March 21 to submit a nomination form to serve as a member of a conference committee, board or agency.

Individuals can complete a nomination form for themselves or for someone else, with the individual's permission.

Those elected will serve for four years on a committee, board or agency. That person can serve a second four-year term on the same committee.

After eight years on one committee, an individual must be off the committee for one year before being eligible to serve on the committee again.

Under the new process this year, anyone wanting to serve on any committee must submit a nomination form, even if they could serve another four years.

This is meant to ensure that individuals will serve where they have passion, competence, and willingness.

A listing of the various committees, board, or agencies is available, along with a nomination form, can be downloaded from the web site <http://www.nccumc.org/connectionalministries.htm>.

Questions can be directed to the Connectional Ministries Office, [leeharris@nccumc.org](mailto:leeharris@nccumc.org) or [cmsmith@nccumc.org](mailto:cmsmith@nccumc.org) or by calling 1-800-849-4433.



Linda Wicker, a member of St. Luke UMC in Sanford is living in Egypt while her husband is assigned there through his work. Wicker has become part of a ministry called "Baby Wash." The group has a simple charter: provide a bath and clean clothes, along with some training and education, for new mothers and their babies. The youth of St. Luke UMC helped raise funds for the ministry.

## St. Luke UMC youth help "Baby Wash" ministry for babies and moms in Egypt

By Jay Locklear \*

In certain parts of Egypt, the necessity of taking a bath is anything but simple. And for babies, who are among the most vulnerable to disease at a critical time in their development, the lack of access to baths as well as proper training makes this problem particularly difficult.

Linda Wicker, a member of St. Luke UMC in Sanford is living in Egypt while her husband is assigned there through his work. Wicker has become part of a ministry called "Baby Wash." The group has a simple charter: provide a bath and clean clothes, along with some training and education, for new mothers and their babies.

One day a week for four weeks, mothers bring the babies to the clinic where they are bathed, dressed in new donated clothes and diapers, and given some basic education on how to help keep their babies clean.

At the end of the four weeks, the mothers are given something that is as important, at least emotionally, as the baths and clothes: a picture of their child, more than likely the only picture they will have.

In December, while home visiting with family and friends, Wicker had an opportunity to speak with the UMYF at St. Luke and share with them about the Baby Wash project. The UMYF agreed to raise funds for Baby Wash and set up a competition between the boys and girls to see who could raise the most. (The boys won by less than \$25.) The night that Wicker made her presentation, without any advance notice to the youth, they gave over \$150.

When it was time for her to head back to Egypt in early January, the cash, coins and checks were totaled. The UMYF at St. Luke raised \$1,429 for the Baby Wash project. In addition, Wicker spoke at local high schools and civic organizations, and received further donations.

The ministry provides some of the most basic necessities for those who truly are the least. Clean water, new clothes, and a loving touch—these things, infused with the love of Christ and the support of a Christian community are helping to make a difference halfway around the world.

\* Jay Locklear is director of youth ministries at St. Luke UMC. For questions about the "Baby Wash" ministry, write him at [youth@saintlukeumc.org](mailto:youth@saintlukeumc.org).

## Raleigh District UMM hosting "Real Men Praise the Lord"

"Real Men Praise The Lord" is the theme of the April 15th meeting of the Raleigh District UMM.

The event will take place at Millbrook UMC with a meal at 6:00pm and the meeting at 7:00pm.

Chuck Killian, pastor at Acts UMC in Apex and retired professor from Asbury Theological Seminary in Kentucky will give a message entitled "Don't Forget Where You Came From."

The meeting will celebrate work

completed at Camp Rockfish on new cabins and offer information on a summer event being planned at Methodist University in August.

Details will also be available about the "No Man Left Behind" training coming September 18, 19, and 20 in Greenville.

"I feel we have an exciting and growing men's ministry, and we are just beginning to scratch the surface," said District UMM President, Bill Shuler.

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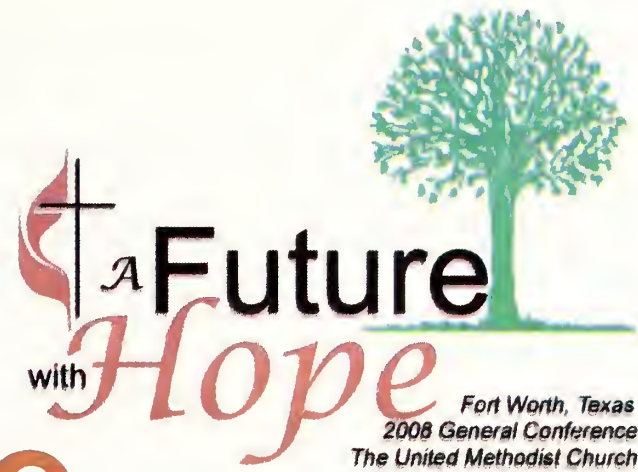
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# Countdown to General Conference



Before General Conference takes place April 23-May 2, many meetings, and discussions will have been held, and many decisions will have been made from the local church and conference levels to the national and global levels.

Because General Conference is the top policy-making body of The United Methodist Church, the gathering, which takes place every four years is deeply significant in the life of the Church.

General Conference is the body authorized to revise *The Book of Discipline* (book of church law) and Social Principles and adopts resolutions on current social, public policy and economic issues. It also approves 4-year plans and budgets for churchwide programs.

Church law provides for a maximum of 1,000 delegates—half clergy, half lay. Conference representation is based on the number of lay and clergy members in the annual conference with representation by at least one lay and one clergy.

### NCC Delegation

The NC Conference (NCC) has a total of 20 delegates (10 lay and 10 clergy) with an additional four alternates. Selected last June at Annual Conference, the lay and clergy delegates for the NCC have held meetings and training sessions to ensure they are prepared for the 10-day event which some have termed “grueling.”

Delegates are assigned to General Conference committees which have meetings to review, debate, modify, and vote on the petitions submitted to the conference. Over 1,500 petitions on subjects ranging from budgets to hymnals to changing the way delegate seats are allocated worldwide will be addressed.

The NCC delegates are inviting clergy and lay members to attend a General Conference listening session. The purpose of these sessions is to give the NC Conference delegation to General Conference an opportunity to listen to clergy and laity express their concerns or opinions on the specific issues that will be before the Conference.

The listening sessions are not designed for debate but to help delegates better understand where members stand on the issues. (Sessions in Greenville and Hampstead took place in February.) To learn more about the issues which will be before the Conference, read pages 7-11 of the February 2008 *NCCC Advocate* and watch for the special section coming in the April edition.

### NCC Listening Sessions:

- April 6 at 3 p.m. — Elizabeth City: First UMC
- April 6 at 4 p.m. — Durham: Epworth UMC
- April 13 at 4 p.m. — Aberdeen: Page Memorial UMC

## Contact the conference delegates

Clergy Name	Address	City	State	Zip
Leeland, Paul	P.O. Box 10955	Raleigh	NC	27605
Hood, Beth	313 Clifton St., Ste. A-2	Greenville	NC	27858
Joyner, Belton	8809 Millers Bend	Bahama	NC	27503
Goehring, Carol	1911 Raeford Rd.	Fayetteville	NC	28305
Bergland, Bob	100 S. Church St.	Rocky Mount	NC	27804
Archer, Trish	384 Semmes Dr.	Wilmington	NC	28412
Southern, Gray	522 S. Duke St.	Durham	NC	27701
Shuler, Albert	107 Williamsburg Dr.	Greenville	NC	27858
Frazier, R. Carl	2916 Wicker St.	Sanford	NC	27330
Fairley, Leonard	P.O. Box 1588	Laurinburg	NC	28353
Alternate NamKoong, Won S.	114 Pelican Pointe Dr.	Elizabeth Cty	NC	27909
Alternate Wynn, Sam	9433 Ten Ten Rd.	Raleigh	NC	27603

Laity Name	Address	City	State	Zip
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Evans, Cashar	69 Poteskeet Trail	Kitty Hawk	NC	27949
Locklear, Gary	667 Locklear Rd.	Pembroke	NC	28372
Norton, Bill	P.O. Box 10955	Raleigh	NC	27605
Adams, Ben	105 W. Rose St.	Smithfield	NC	27577
Little, Laura L.	217 King George Rd.	Greenville	NC	27858
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Parker, Mack	2204 Laurel Valley Way	Raleigh	NC	27604
Norris, Beth	4714 Ludwell Branch Ct.	Raleigh	NC	27612
Taylor, Steve	410 W. 18th St.	Lumberton	NC	28358
Alternate McMillan, Duncan	1703 Anita Dr.	Laurinburg	NC	28352
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To email the entire General Conference Delegation write to:  
[ncgeneral\\_conference@listserv.nccumc.org](mailto:ncgeneral_conference@listserv.nccumc.org)

## Committee assignments announced for General Conference delegation

Committee	Clergy	Laity
Church and Society 1	Leonard Fairley	Ben Adams
Church and Society 2		Steve Taylor
Conferences		Mack Parker
Discipleship	Bob Bergland	Anna Gail Workman
Faith and Order	Carol Goehring	
Financial Administration	Gray Southern	Laura Little
General Administration	Carl Frazier	Cashar Evans
Global Ministries		Emily Innes
Independent Commissions	Belton Joyner	Bill Norton
Judicial Administration	Patricia Archer	
Local Church	Albert Shuler	Gary Locklear
Ministry and Higher Ed	Paul Leeland	Beth Norris
Superintendency	Beth Hood	



# Pre-Conference news briefing explores changes to assembly

By Marta W. Aldrich \*

When United Methodists convene this spring for their worldwide assembly, they can expect wider international representation, a denominational budget built around four new areas of focus, and carefully choreographed opening sessions aimed at fostering unity through common ministry instead of gridlock over divisive social issues.

The 2008 General Conference will meet for 10 days—two fewer than the 2004 gathering in Pittsburgh and with no break—but still must sort through more than 1,500 petitions, which is about the same amount of business conducted at the previous assembly.

In addition to hearing opening addresses from a United Methodist bishop and lay person, delegates will hear the first-ever Young People's Address—delivered jointly by six teens and young adults who promise a presentation “different from anything that's ever been presented to General Conference before.”

The new approaches are among a bevy of changes outlined during the United Methodist Pre-General Conference News Briefing, an informational session attended by more than 200 delegation representatives and church journalists.

Three delegates from the NC Conference attended the briefing.

The Jan. 24-26 briefing, sponsored by United Methodist Communications, was held near the Fort Worth Convention Center, where General Conference will open on April 23.

“This is going to be an historic event,” said Mary Brooke Casad of this year's opening sessions, which will feature intricate staging and multimedia effects in delivering a message of unity and hope in mission and ministry.

“We've never done it this way before. It's not going to be just business as usual,” said Casad, executive secretary of the Connectional Table—itsself a new entity formed by the last General Conference to coordinate mission, ministries and resources for The United Methodist Church.

## A new agenda

Weary of decades of the church's top legislative meeting being consumed

by debate over homosexuality and other hot-button issues, the Council of Bishops and other denominational leaders have shaped a new churchwide agenda with the overarching purpose of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

The agenda includes four areas of focus: developing principled Christian leaders for the church and the world; creating “new places for new generations” by starting new churches and renewing existing ones; engaging in ministry with the poor; and fighting the killer diseases of poverty such as malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS.

Church leaders believe this new focus will help United Methodists unite to

address the world's core needs, reclaim the church's Wesleyan heritage, start a movement and, as a bonus, reverse decades of declining membership trends.

“This is about alignment—with the Council of Bishops, the Connectional Table, what's happening in annual conferences—and saying we're going to coalesce (and) combine to make a difference,” said the Rev. Jerome Del Pino, chief executive of the Board of Higher Education and Ministry, which will oversee the leadership initiative.

It also is hoped that, when the nearly 1,000 delegates leave General Conference to return to their home districts and churches, they will know the four areas of focus by heart and, with a new clarity about “what my church is doing,” spread that vision and sense of identity to the people in the pews.

Delegates at the briefing said it's time for Jesus Christ to “do a new thing with our church.”

“I'm not hearing as much about the more controversial issues so far,” said the Rev. Henry Frueh, a second-time delegate from the Troy Annual (regional) Conference in New York.

“There's more talk about the church positioning itself to be more effective in the world. I think there's a sense that if we don't change the way we do church, we're going to lose the opportunity,” he said.

The Rev. Tom Berlin, a delegate from Herndon, Va., said many people

**“There's more talk about the church positioning itself to be more effective in the world.”**

**I think there's a sense that if we don't change the way we do church, we're going to lose the opportunity.”**

**The Rev. Henry Frueh**

## Proposed new social creed is structured as a litany

At General Conference 2008, delegates will vote on whether to adopt a new social creed to replace Paragraph 166 VII of the *Book of Discipline*.

Dr. Charles M. Smith, conference connectional ministries director, served as a member of the group that wrote the new creed. Smith and Dr. Laura Little are members of the General Board of Church and Society.

Influenced by the Social Gospel movement and the progressive politics of early 20th century America, the Methodist Social Creed originated a century ago in 1908. It expressed Methodism's outrage over the pain and suffering of millions of workers in factories, mines, mills, tenements and company towns all across America.

This first Social Creed of any Christian denomination emerged from the 1907 birth of the Methodist Federation for Social Service, which later became the Methodist Federation for Social Action. In 1908 federation leaders worked closely with a General Conference legislative committee to put together a report titled “The Church and Social Problems.”

The Social Creed, which follows the Social Principles section in *The Book of Discipline* of The United Methodist Church, has been altered through the years. This new, more poetic version, proposed by the General Board of Church and Society, is structured as a litany to encourage and facilitate responsive reading by groups and congregations. The hope is that as more congregations read and recite it, they will internalize, teach and live out its precepts, turning words into deeds.

The Social Creed remains a testimony to the spirit and intentionality of Christ's disciples who, from their personal experiences with the Living Savior, boldly seek to transform the world for Christ. It provides a foundation for many of the public statements and resolutions issued by conferences and agencies of the Church, thus ensuring that the denomination is not silent in the midst of hate, persecution, exclusion, and oppression.

This new version of the Creed—like others before it—speaks to the heart of the Church, calling us to be inclusive and open to God's diversity, to seek peace with justice and reconciliation throughout God's creation.

God in the Spirit revealed in Jesus Christ,  
calls us by grace

**to be renewed in the image of our Creator,  
that we may be one  
in divine love for the world.**

Today is the day  
God cares for the integrity of creation,  
wills the healing and wholeness of all life,  
weeps at the plunder of earth's goodness.

**And so shall we.**

Today is the day  
God embraces all hues of humanity,  
delights in diversity and difference,  
favors solidarity transforming strangers into friends.

**And so shall we.**

Today is the day  
God cries with the masses of starving people,  
despises growing disparity between rich and poor,  
demands justice for workers in the marketplace.

**And so shall we.**

Today is the day  
God deplores violence in our homes and streets,  
rebukes the world's warring madness,  
humbles the powerful and lifts up the lowly.

**And so shall we.**

Today is the day  
God calls for nations and peoples to live in peace,  
celebrates where justice and mercy embrace,  
exults when the wolf grazes with the lamb.

**And so shall we.**

**Today is the day  
God brings good news to the poor,  
proclaims release to the captives,  
gives sight to the blind, and  
sets the oppressed free.**

**And so shall we.**

See “News briefing,” page 9



# News briefing explores changes at General Conference from pg. 8

in his generation (ages 30 to 45) are disenchanted by past General Conferences that have focused on discordant social issues that "are so predictable in their outcome"—and not enough on substantive issues of need in the world.

The result, he said, is that ordained and lay leaders are tempted to cocoon themselves in their local churches "because it's just not worth the emotional energy."

"Friends, we're going to have to lay down our arms on these other issues if we want to deal with the (new) ones," Berlin told one panel group.



More than 200 delegation leaders and church journalists attend the United Methodist Pre-General Conference News Briefing, an informational session on issues and processes of the denomination's upcoming assembly in Fort Worth, Texas. The Jan. 24-26 briefing, sponsored by United Methodist Communications, was held near the Fort Worth Convention Center, where General Conference will open on April 23. UMNS photo by Larry Nelson.

## Building a better budget

The briefing featured a session on the \$642 million, four-year spending plan for the denomination beginning in 2009—and the new processes and criteria for developing the budget proposal.

For the first time, the plan was built on an "outcome-based" model that much of the business world already follows.

Church agencies were asked to shape their funding requests around the four new areas of focus.

Also for the first time, the General Council on Finance and Administration shared the budget-building process with the Connectional Table.

"We're trying to do something different," said Bishop Lindsey Davis of the North Georgia Area, a member of the council's board.

"We're trying to do something in a more collaborative fashion together."

Davis said the previous budget process was "more competitive than it should have been" among various groups within the church contending for their "fair share" of the pie.

"What we're trying to do...is to begin to align this budget not only with the areas of focus...but with a church that is beginning to think very specifically about outcomes, about being productive and effective and actually changing the world," he said.

The \$642 million plan represents a 1.2 percent annual increase for a total increase of 4.8 percent over four years.

"All of us know inflation is more than that," Davis said. "In terms of real dollars, it represents less money for all our boards and agencies and less money for the general church at large."

He also emphasized that the budget represents only 1 percent of the net spending of the entire denomination and cautioned against skimping on mission and ministry done at the denominational level.

"Ninety-nine percent of all the resources of our

denomination are spent at the local, annual conference and jurisdictional level," Davis said.

## New faces, new rules

With United Methodist membership shrinking in the United States and growing in Africa and the Philippines, the makeup of General Conference delegates will reflect those trends.

Central conference delegates (those in annual conferences outside the United States) will have 278 delegates, 100 more than in 2004. Annual conferences in U.S. jurisdictions have elected 714 delegates.

Church leaders who oversee delegate training asked the U.S. delegates to show patience and understanding in working with overseas delegates who need time

for translation services and are unfamiliar with the parliamentary procedure used in the U.S.

"If we're going to be a global church, we need to hear each other's voices, and we need to be attentive to each other's voices, and we need to be understanding that the American way is only one way," said the Rev. Gere Reist, secretary of the General Conference.

Reist urged delegates to carefully read proposed rule changes that will be voted on at the beginning of the assembly. "There are significant changes this time around," he said.

He cited proposals to elect all subcommittee chairs by ballot, merging the Commission on General Conference with the Committee on Rules, and using parliamentarians in all legislative committees.

The proposed rules also prohibit talking on cell phones and using laptop computers on the convention floor.

The Rev. Gary Graves, petitions secretary, reported that more than a quarter of the 1,564 petitions filed are related to the Board of Church and Society, the church's social action agency.

Delegates will get their first look at all the petitions after receiving *The Advance Daily Christian Advocate*, which publishes petitions and other information

related to General Conference.

Graves thanked petitioners for "making the transition to digital submissions."

"I know that it was like pulling teeth for some people, and others can't figure why it took us 20 years to catch up with everybody else," he said.

He noted that the change saved money and trees and shaved about two months of production time off the petitions process.

## Educational setting

The news briefing was designed to be informational, not legislative in nature, said the Rev. Larry Hollon, chief executive of United Methodist Communications, who welcomed participants to Fort Worth. "We are taking a conversational approach," he said.

Briefings ranged from hot-button issues such as Middle East-related divestment to strategies encouraging healthier lifestyles by pastors and church employees.

Other panel discussions included ethnic initiatives in the church, proposals to change United Methodist structure to reflect the worldwide nature of the church, a new Social Creed up for consideration, the State of the Church report and how to navigate General Conference.

Breakout sessions for delegates addressed "holy conferencing"—practices designed to set a more civil tone of discussion and listening in the legislative process.

\* Marta Aldrich is news editor of UM News Service.



The Rev. Anne Burkholder uses a visual aid to caution church journalists against oversimplifying stories as debates between liberals and conservatives. UMNS photo by Marta Aldrich.



"You can expect us to be honest," says Matt Lockett, who will help deliver the first-ever Young People's Address. The address will be delivered jointly by six teens and young adults who promise a presentation "different from anything that's ever been presented to General Conference before." UMNS photo by Larry Nelson.



# United Methodists discuss how to have hard conversations about divisive issues

By Linda Green\*

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) - United Methodists need to learn how to talk about divisive issues in constructive ways that bring people together, says the director of the church's JustPeace ministry.

For the last few years, United Methodists have been seeking ways to have debates on difficult issues without stopping dialogue on them.

As the denomination's top lawmaking assembly prepares to meet in Fort Worth, Texas, in April, bishops and other church leaders have called for a civil gathering that places more emphasis on common ministry rather than on issues such as homosexuality, which have divided previous General Conferences.

"Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could experience holy conferencing in Fort Worth, if we could name the real issues in our church and talk about them, learn from each other and come to a better place?" asked the Rev. Tom Porter, executive director of JustPeace.

## Engaging conflict constructively

The Washington D.C.-based ministry seeks to help United Methodists "engage conflict constructively." Members of JustPeace came together to learn about best practices in having difficult conversations, as identified in the book *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*.

"If you want to understand a difficult conversation, you must understand what people are thinking and feeling,"

said Douglas Stone, one of three co-authors of the book. Stone, who is also a senior negotiator and instructor in conflict resolution for the Triad Consulting Group, Cambridge, Mass., defined a difficult conversation as one in which a person finds a topic or issue challenging or hard to talk about.

Conflicts arise over scarce resources and how to divide them and also involve matters of perception that lead to people not getting along with one another, he said. "The question is about trying to understand in a deeper way how we see things."

Ted Crass, a JustPeace member from the Florida Annual Conference and senior consultant with CMPartners, Cambridge, Mass., called conflict "a natural part of life and a natural part of who we are as individuals."

## Getting to the heart of personal experience

Sexuality, abortion, immigration and other issues "are difficult to talk about in the church because they get to the heart of peoples' personal experience, their identity and perspective on faith," Crass said. Often, a person has reactions to what someone is saying that make it difficult to understand the perspective of the other person. "All of those issues strike people at the core of their identity or faith," he said.

Porter said people need to engage one another with a sense of wonder and awe, have "appreciative inquiry" and draw on people's strengths and assets, and "realize that there are a lot of sharp edges in this life." Living together, working together and talking together

are issues of deep concern in the church, he said.

"We know that we (the church) like to wait to have difficult conversations, and sometimes we wait until it all explodes, and it is not pretty what happens when we don't deal with the issues, we don't name them, don't engage them and don't go on to the table to talk about them," Porter said.

## Creating listening space

Stone advised that delegates to General Conference, the denomination's top lawmaking assembly, deal with hot-button issues by creating space for listening and inquiry, to take the role of understanding how others view issues instead of being purely an advocate.

Inquiry, he said, "is helping me understand not just what you see but why you see it that way. What goes into your point of view? What values and experiences, what assumptions, what fears, your predictions about the future, what do you care about?"

People fear or avoid difficult conversations because they fear the consequences, but all difficult conversations have a common structure, Stone said. Each difficult conversation is really three conversations - involving facts, feelings, and identity - that can make it difficult to talk with one another, he said.

"Difficult conversations involve strong emotions or issues about how I see myself in the world," Stone said. Strong emotions may come from the values a person has and also may be the result of how "people feel treated in the relationship," he added. "How we talk

to each other may influence emotion."

Porter and others at the JustPeace gathering lamented that Robert's Rules of Order, the recognized guide that organizations use to run meetings, can sometimes impede conversation, listening and learning.

According to Stone, the valuable conversations that people need may occur as side conversations or be on a parallel track from the primary plenary sessions.

"It also may be that it is time to take a look at Robert's Rules in terms of whether that is the best way to use all of the time or if time can be designated for other conversations."

The issue is about more than civil discourse, he said. It is about how to communicate well, clearly and openly.

"It is not just about how to be nice to each other or how to be civil to each other. It is about how to really talk and understand each other."

Understanding one another is a first step toward conflict resolution, he said. But, even if one does not overcome the conflict, "it is an independent and good thing to understand one another."

## A necessary topic

The Rev. Stephanie Hixon, the director of resources and administration for JustPeace, said the gathering was not programmed to impact General Conference.

Hixon said the hope is that the participants, in their various contexts, would interact with delegates and others affiliated with General Conference to share the tools and skills learned from the difficult conversations book and other conflict resolution resources.

"What we are trying to do and help people to do and invite people to do is engage conflict well and constructively," she said. "We believe that goes even deeper than civil discourse."

"Our hope is that folks will prepare themselves for engagement, that they will be open to others, and that they will draw on a source that not only includes best practices and skills (for conflict resolution) but the prompting of the Holy Spirit to help them to know when to use these kinds of skills," Hixon said.

She acknowledged that it is human nature to want to avoid those conversations that are not comfortable. But, she said, "Christians and United Methodists are called to bear witness not only in the resolution of our decision or the decision that we make but also in the manner in which we carry out that decision making."

\* Linda Green is a UM News Service news writer based in Nashville, Tenn.

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**Upcoming events  
throughout the Conference**

## **Caring for Creation explores faith community's role in environmental care April 3-6**

Caring for Creation, a workshop experience for laity and clergy, will address how the faith community can promote justice for Earth and its people. Participants will explore their residential and faith communities' role in environmental care.

The event will take place April 3-6, 2008 at the Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center. It is offered by the Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center and the United Methodist Women of the Southeastern Jurisdiction.

For a detailed workshop schedule and online registration information, visit the web site [http://www.sejumc.org/ministries\\_goodword.aspx?id=992](http://www.sejumc.org/ministries_goodword.aspx?id=992). For more information, contact Loy Lilley at [llilley@sejumc.org](mailto:llilley@sejumc.org).

## **Training to recognize and respond to domestic violence**

Duke Divinity School and Duke University Health System will co-sponsor "Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault: Providing Competent Medical and Spiritual Care" Saturday, April 12 at Durham Regional Hospital. The day-long event is for anyone who is interested in improving their ability to recognize and respond appropriately to abuse in their professional and personal capacities.

There will be an emphasis on the spiritual impact of abuse. CEU credit is available for completion of the program. The general registration fee is \$20 which includes breakfast and lunch and \$10 for students. For more information and a copy of the brochure, call 919-684-4293 or email [candice.ryals@duke.edu](mailto:candice.ryals@duke.edu).

## **David Crowder Band show to benefit MU campus ministry**

On Sunday, April 13 Methodist University is sponsoring the David Crowder Band in concert at the Crown Coliseum in Fayetteville. Individual and group tickets go on sale this month (February). Proceeds from the concert support campus ministry and mission projects of Methodist University.

Contact the University Relations and Campus Ministry Office at Methodist University for information on purchasing tickets (910) 630-7515.

## **Resource event planned for children's ministry April 19 & 23**

"Let the Children Come," a resource event for leaders in local church children's ministry (especially medium to smaller churches) will be held on two dates at two locations in the Conference this year: Saturday, April 19 at Salem UMC (Greenville District) and Saturday, Aug. 23 at Page Memorial UMC (Aberdeen-Sanford District).

Pre-registration is not required and there is no cost to attend the event. The events will run from 9:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. each date. A detailed flyer including the event schedule, lists of workshops being offered and other information is available at <http://www.nccumc.org/childrnmn/letthemcome08.pdf>.

## **Laity weekend: Forgiving our enemies - the test of true faith**

Duke Laity Weekend is April 25-26. Laity Weekend is an opportunity for laity of all communions to cultivate their faith through focused study with leading Divinity School faculty.

The weekend begins on Friday featuring Mickey Efird, dinner, keynote lecture with Dr. J. Warren Smith and continues with four morning and four afternoon classes to choose from on Saturday. This program is sponsored by the Center for Continuing Education at Duke Divinity School.

For a complete schedule, class listings and to register online, visit the web site <http://www.divinity.duke.edu/learningforlife/programs/laityweekend>.

## **Conference Youth Rally Day at NC Wesleyan on April 27**

Youth Rally Day will be Sunday, April 27 at NC Wesleyan College in Rocky Mount from 3-6 p.m. Youth groups are invited to enjoy the time of recreation, fellowship and worship. The ECU Wesley Foundation Praise Team and Wesley Singers will provide music. Youth groups are invited to sponsor recreational activities or offer an act of worship. The youth group of Northwoods UMC will provide a prayer labyrinth.

There is no cost to attend Rally Day (although refreshments will be available for purchase and an offering will be taken for Youth Service Fund) and groups do not need to pre-register to attend. More information about Rally Day can be found at Youth Ministry.

## **Three more Disciple Bible training sessions in 2008**

This year's DBOM DISCIPLE Bible Study training initiative schedule has now been set. Training events in the NC Conference will take place in the following districts: May 10: Rocky Mount District - Nashville UMC; May 17: Durham District - McMannen UMC; and May 24: Elizabeth City District - First UMC: Elizabeth City.

Training in all four levels of DISCIPLE Bible Study and the RINGS OF FELLOWSHIP youth study will be provided at these events. The event is free to all lay and clergy persons. Lunch will be provided for a small fee. Registration is required. For more details and to register, go to [www.disciplebibleoutreach.org](http://www.disciplebibleoutreach.org).

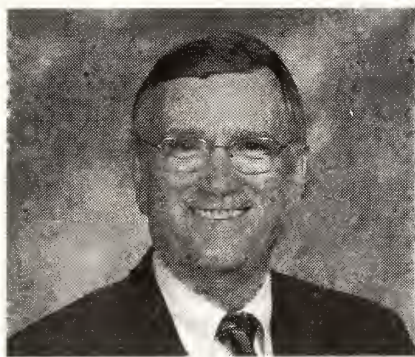
## **Hearing accessibility conference coming on May 31**

A conference on hearing accessibility is set for Saturday, May 31, from 10am - 3pm at Garner UMC in Garner. The event is sponsored by the North Carolina Conference Committee on Disability Concerns.

Registration is required by May 23. An early bird registration fee of \$15 is available to anyone signing up by May 1. After May 1, the registration fee is \$20. Lunch is included.

To learn more about the event and obtain registration information, visit the web site <http://nccmentalhealth.org/hearing.htm> or call John Crowe at (919) 759-2146.





By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

# April <sup>adult</sup> BIBLE STUDY

**April 6, 2008**

**Text: Daniel 1**  
**"Daniel Keeps Covenant in a Foreign Land"**

Verse 10 jumped out at me. In the midst of celebrating Daniel's steadfastness in holding to Hebrew values even while he was a captive in a foreign land (1:5), I came to the ripple effect of that faithfulness.

Daniel's determination to eat kosher food—and not the rich rations of the king—affected people other than Daniel. The palace master feared for his life, not because of something the palace master was doing but because of something Daniel was doing (1:10).

It is one thing, an admirable thing, to seek to be morally pure, but what is the morally faithful thing to do when

our decisions bring harm to others? Is it better to be morally pure or to avoid harming others?

For some, this decision is faced when considering whether or not to participate in war. For some, this decision is faced when they decide not to shop on Sunday but in so doing help put out of employment needy workers.

For some, this decision is faced when determining whether to take literally Jesus' injunction against divorce, but in so doing allowing an abuser to continue that cruel and sinful practice.

Daniel was facing one of the gray places of the spiritual journey: doing the right thing sometimes causes hurt for others. At minimum, we are reminded that the results of even our best motives can be besmirched by our sinful nature.

On the other hand, John Wesley teaches us that God can give the gift of full love of God and full love of neighbor (Wesley called it Christian perfection or entire sanctification). Wesley said he did not mean "sinless perfection"

when he spoke of perfection. To my mind and heart, this is Wesley's way of acknowledging the tension between meaning good and doing good.

Daniel resolved the tension, not by ignoring it, but by struggling with the difficult task of trying to move to a win-win situation.

In this text, Daniel does not simply say "Sorry, I must be pure; I don't care what it means to your life (or death)." Rather, Daniel begins the slow process of finding a common ground (1:12-13). It's hard work, but it is the kind of work that God blesses.

## What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Going On to Salvation* (Discipleship Resources), Maxie Dunnam quotes Steve Harper: "The Bible puts it this way: even our best actions look like filthy rags in comparison to God. We cannot hope to match (God) in actions, but we can be one with (God) in motive."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Look into my heart, Lord Jesus. Clear my hidden desires and make me at one with Your will. Remove my foolish thought of any holiness apart from Your presence. And take the broken offering I bring and make it whole..."

**April 13, 2008**

**Text: Daniel 3**  
**"Three Refuse to Break Covenant"**

Three months or so ago, central North Carolina got a light snowfall. As these sorts of things push us to do around here, there was generated a rush on milk, bread, and firewood. I heard a television report that one local store had sold over two hundred sleds. I e-mailed this fact to a friend who lives in Portland, Maine. He replied that the same chain store in Portland probably sold two sleds that same day.

Folks in Maine are accustomed to snow. We are not. For them, snow is business as usual. For us, it is a rush of closings and fender benders. For them, it is the way life is. For us, it is the way life temporarily halts.

In Babylon, it was business as usual when King Nebuchadnezzar built a giant image that was to be worshiped (Daniel 3:6). The report in Daniel 3:7 is that "all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the golden statue." It was no big deal—just more snow in Portland, Maine.

But there was in Babylon a group for whom it was a big deal: the faithful

Jews. Because the Jews refused to worship the statue instead of God, they were denounced (Daniel 1:8). The word translated "denounced" has a literal meaning of "took a bite out of"—so the accusation is more than just a legal challenge; it is an effort to destroy, to eat alive. The intent is gruesome.

The story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego is the stuff of Bible picture books. The three survived the time in the fiery furnace (3:26) but had been willing to die if that had been necessary (3:18). But, no matter how you slice it, it was not just another—ho hum—day of snow. It was, for them, something different, something in the face of custom and culture. It was more like snow in central North Carolina.

We southerners try to prepare for snow, but when push comes to shove—oops, maybe in getting a car out of the ditch!—we are still dealing with the unusual. When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego faced the unusual, the unexpected, they turned to what they knew to be consistent, even in the midst of the surprise: the faithfulness of God (3:28).

## What Someone Else Has Said:

Theodore W. Jennings, Jr. (*Loyalty to God*, Abingdon) writes: "A danger that is always present in these subjective views of faith is that they may lead us to rely not upon God but upon our faith itself."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "New days come to us, O God, and Your faithful love greets each one of them. Even in the face of a culture that does not care, You have called us to care..."

**April 20, 2008**

**Text: Daniel 6**  
**"Daniel's Life and Death Test"**

A wag once said that if the lion lies down with the lamb (Isaiah 11:6), probably only the lion is going to get up. The odds of Lions vs. Daniel do not seem very good (Daniel 6:16). I doubt that odds makers in Las Vegas would have even been willing to bet against the behemoths. The final score was certain: Lions 1, Daniel 0.

Of course, we know that is not the way it turned out. God delivered the faithful Daniel from the hungry beasts (6:22).

Are there lions in today's world that we Christians need to face? We remember well that even though Daniel

See "Bible study," page 14

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## Alabama

A United Methodist has become the first African American to win election from his district to the Alabama House of Representatives.

The Rev. James C. Fields Jr., 54, a part-time local pastor at St. James United Methodist Church in Irondale, Ala., won a Jan. 29 special election for the District 12 seat. He was sworn into the legislature as it began a 30-day session on Feb. 5.

Fields, a Democrat, won 59 percent of the vote to defeat Republican Wayne Willingham. District 12, with about 80,000 people, is the largest of three legislative districts in Cullman County, and its residents are overwhelmingly white and mostly Republican.

Fields attributed his election victory to "being just a hometown boy. I think people were able to see past race."

## Norway & Liberia

United Methodists in Norway and Liberia have signed a partnership agreement to develop and promote community-based projects throughout Liberia.

The memorandum of understanding, signed in mid-January in Monrovia, emphasizes mutual cooperation and clarifies the authority and responsibility of the Liberia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church and The United Methodist Church of Norway.

Funding for the five-year development program, based on a document prepared and approved by both parties in March 2007, will come from the Norwegian church and its donors.

The goal is to improve lives and create sustainable communities in war-torn Liberia, thereby improving the living condition for people in communities with United Methodist congregations.

## Moscow

The Rev. Sergei V. Nikolaev has been elected president of the Russia United Methodist Theological Seminary in Moscow.

Calling the election "a great honor," Nikolaev said he hopes the seminary will lead development of the denomination in Eurasia, "strengthening the Methodist theological and spiritual identity."



Since its opening in 1995, more than 100 pastors have studied at the seminary through residency and correspondence programs, coming from as far away as Siberia and the Far East, Central Asia, Ukraine and Belarus. Over 30 students are enrolled during the current academic year.

Nikolaev recently received his doctorate in the History of Christian Tradition from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, where his dissertation explored the issue of Orthodox church relations to non-Orthodox churches.

## Kenya

Continued violence in Kenya has displaced hundreds of thousands of citizens and disrupted the food supply in parts of that African nation.

Stockpiled food has quickly disappeared, and the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) is appealing to United Methodists to donate money to bolster the food supply. UMCOR has spent \$120,000 on relief needs in Kenya since early January, assisting more than 10,000 people in the region.

"There's just not enough food to feed people," said the Rev. Sam Dixon, UMCOR chief executive.

Donations to assist UMCOR's response in Kenya can be dropped in local church collection plates or mailed to UMCOR, P.O. Box 9068, New York, NY 10087.

Write "UMCOR Advance #982450,

International Disaster Response-Kenya" on the check memo line. For credit card donations, visit UMCOR's Web site at [www.umcor.org](http://www.umcor.org) for online giving information or call (800) 554-8583.

## Washington, D.C.

On the 35th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, thousands of anti-abortion advocates marched in Washington "to witness to a culture and a gospel of life," said the Rev. Paul T. Stallworth, director of an unofficial United Methodist pro-life caucus.

Bishop William H. Willimon, Birmingham episcopal area, praised Lifewatch's efforts. This marks the 20th year Lifewatch has held a worship service before the March for Life.

"The role of the church is to stoke, fund and fuel alternatives we could not have come up with if we looked only at the alternatives the world gives us," said Willimon, cautioning United Methodists against a "lack of imagination that leads to accommodation."

An executive with the denomination's social action agency agrees the church needs to look at the issues that lead women to choose abortion.

"If we, as people of faith, are really serious about reducing the number of abortions in this country and around the globe, then we need to be serious about addressing the issues holding women hostage to circumstances resulting in abortion," said Linda Bales, an executive with the UM Board of Church and Society.

## South Africa

A Methodist bishop is crying foul after police staged a brutal raid on Central Methodist Mission in Johannesburg, South Africa, arresting more than a thousand refugees and damaging property.

The raid, which began around 11 p.m. on Jan. 30 and lasted for nearly four hours, caused both physical and psychological trauma, according to Bishop Paul Verryn.

In a telephone interview from Johannesburg, Verryn told UM News Service that police broke down every door in the church building during a raid that they later labeled a "routine" search for drugs, guns and illegal immigrants.

Central Methodist Mission receives support from the United Methodist Committee on Relief for its Ray of Hope ministry, which provides shelter, food, clothing, child care, counseling and employment assistance to refugees.

Many of the refugees are schoolteachers, accountants and other professionals fleeing economic hardship and political strife in neighboring Zimbabwe.

## Hilton Head Island, SC

The youth at St. Andrew By-The-Sea United Methodist Church, in Hilton Head Island, S.C., hope its next director will surf the Internet to find them.

The youth created and starred in a minute-long video advertisement touting their "great location," "really cool building" and "awesome pastor" and inviting potential candidates to "come surf with us at St. Andrew on Hilton Head Island."

They posted the ad, complete with scenes of kids playing beach volleyball, and basketball, on a popular video-sharing web site and handed out postcards at a youth conference.

More than 1,300 people have viewed the ad since its November posting, and approximately 200 candidates submitted their resumes for the job.

While the church used other traditional advertising methods as well, nearly every applicant mentioned the video.

*Compiled from UMNS briefs.*

**Church Mice**

by Karl Zorowski

A reference for the rest of us:

# Theology FOR DUMMIES

By Rev. Cheese

## Chapter 32: Hope and Faith

**Hope** is when you go to church to pray for rain during a drought.

**Faith** is when you bring an umbrella.



# April adult Bible study

survives the lions in this account, many faithful martyrs died for faith in the early centuries of those who followed Jesus.

The question seems not to be "What

## Marriage

Charles Pollock (New Bern District: Reelsboro) and Irene Lynn were married January 12, 2008 at Ann Street United Methodist Church in Beaufort.

## Adoption

Bryan (New Bern District: Centenary Associate) and Duffy Huffman celebrated the adoption of their daughter, Faith Ann Huffman on Dec. 17, 2007.

## Death

HARRELL, Haywood (Goldsboro District: Retired) died Feb. 11, 2008. The funeral was held Feb. 14 in Goldsboro with burial near Seven Springs.

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chance of success do I have against the lions" but the question becomes "Even in the face of lions, how am I to be faithful?" (Remember last week's lesson: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego went willingly into the furnace, honoring God whether or not God rescued them from the flames—Daniel 3:17-18).

Facing lions is no picnic, but perhaps we have been invited not to a picnic but to a banquet in God's coming, but not yet, kingdom!

What about the lions of racism? What about the lions of sexism? What about the lions of nationalism? What about the lions of biases based on sexual orientation? What about the lions of injustice? What about the lions of privilege? Mercy! There are plenty of lions to be faced today!

The power of lions is real. (Note in 6:24 that the story makes it clear that these were real, hungry lions, not toothless pets.)

But the test of discipleship, the test of faithfulness, the test of works wrought by faith might well be how willing we are to be thrown into the den of lions.

Success in the lions' den does not always look like the way we ordinarily keep score of victories. The blood of the martyrs is also success.

### What Someone Else Has Said:

Mary Catherine Hilkert (*Naming Grace*, Continuum) has written about preaching: "Precisely because the Christian message is a living tradition of grace—the mystery of God-among-us—it must be handed on through the lived experience of the community as well as through word. Proclamation interprets the life of discipleship, but the community's shared discipleship embodies the proclamation."

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of lions and life, we thank You for the example of faithfulness shown us in Your servant Daniel. Help us to be ready to face the powers in this world that would try to destroy us. Grant us the courage that comes from trust; give us the power that comes from submission; touch us with the grace that is sufficient..."

### April 27, 2008

#### Text: Daniel 9 "Daniel's Prayer for the People"

This Sunday comes in the middle of the 2008 General Conference of The United Methodist Church.

As I write today, I can only offer conjecture on what will be going on in Fort Worth when nearly 1,000 delegates from around the world seek to open themselves to God's will.

Alas, it is not all a scene of joy and connection.

## from page 12

Here are some of my thoughts of those ten days in Texas:

Some issues will have been settled, often with a clear sense of winners and losers, rather than a sense of common discernment.

Some of the United Methodist family will feel excluded, broken from the rest of the body. Debate about how to spend large sums of money will get more attention than discussion of strategies for evangelism.

And there will be good news: as a denomination, globally we are growing in membership.

There will be reports of vigorous discipleship—in campus ministry, for example, or in Shalom Zone ministries among the poor.

There will be visions of some new, creative ways of doing ministry.

So, it will be a mixed bag. How could it not be a mixed bag with a faithful God trying to use an uneven people!

And here is where we meet this week's study text. Daniel looks at the people of God in a pivotal, but sometimes discouraging, situation (Daniel 9:7). And what he offers is not a self-congratulatory listing of Israel's virtues (although there are, of course, some stories to tell: remember the fiery furnace? Remember the lions' den?).

What he offers is a prayer of confession: "not...on the ground of our righteousness, but on the ground of your great mercies" (9:18).

Might that not be a call to The United Methodist Church to confess that we have not been all we could be.

We have made choices that diverted us from faithfulness. We have been intrigued more by structure than by the mystery of God's grace.

Even so...even so. God has not deserted this family of faith. Did not Israel find that God was with them even when they were in Babylon?

God is still with The United Methodist Church, even as the unfoldings of the General Conference seek to find that good tomorrow that is coming toward us.

We know it is good because God answers confession and repentance with forgiveness, renewal, and yet another call to serve.

### What Someone Else Has Said:

John Wesley (*Thoughts Upon Methodism, The Works of John Wesley*, Abingdon) wrote: "I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist...but I am afraid lest they should exist only as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power."

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Forgive and restore..."

## conference CALENDAR

### March

- 7 UMW Church Women United World Day of Prayer
- 8 Confirmation Celebration; Methodist Univ., 10am-2:30pm (registration required)
- 10-12 Stewardship Seminar, Trinity Center, Salter Path
- 10-13 Full Connection Interviews, St. Luke UMC, Goldsboro District
- 25-30 Global Vision (Orientation date: March 15)

### April

- 3 - 6 Caring for Creation, Lake Junaluska
- 4 - 6 Kaleidoscope; Don Lee Center
- 4 - 6 Southeastern Jurisdiction UMW Quadrennial Meeting; Hampton, VA
- 5 NC Conference Historical Society; 9:30am - noon;
- 5 NC Conf. Commission on Archives & History; 1-3 pm; John Wesley UMC, Fayetteville
- 12 UMW Executive Committee Meeting; 9am; Rose Hill UMC; Rose Hill
- 15-16 Christian Educators Fellowship Retreat with Jo Elaine Harris; Bergland Center, Camp Rockfish
- 19 "Let the Children Come" - children's ministry leaders workshop; Salem UMC; Greenville, 9:45am-12:15 pm
- 26 UMW Racial Justice Workshop; Chestnut Street UMC, Lumberton
- 27 Youth Rally Day; NC Wesleyan College; Rocky Mount, 3-6pm

For more information, visit [www.nccumc.org](http://www.nccumc.org) and click on "Calendar" at the top of the page.



# Around the CONFERENCE



## Rougemont Charge - Open Tables Ministry

Union Baptist Church in Durham presented the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Holiday "Keeper of the Dream" Award, to the Open Tables Ministry on Jan. 21. Duke Divinity students began The Open Tables Ministry over four years ago to reach out to homeless individuals along the 15/501 Corridor in Durham. This ministry is currently anchored in the Rougemont Charge in the Durham District and is supported by several other churches, also in the Durham District. Shown with the award are (L-R) Beth Davis, Jay Davis, Durham district missions coordinator; Emily Sanford, current leader of The Open Tables Ministry; and Douglas Wagner, pastor of the Rougemont Charge.



## Elizabeth City District - New UMW unit

Twenty-two women of three United Methodist Churches, Hebron, Pleasant Grove and Mackeys, have joined hands to form a new unit of United Methodist Women (UMW). Elizabeth City District UMW President Billie S. Denny is pictured presenting the Charter Certificate to President Julianne Chappell. Other officers are, left to right, Vonnice Furlough, vice-president; Betty Lloyd, secretary; and Sarah Belch, treasurer. The Reverend Frank Alexander is the pastor of the Albemarle Charge.



## First UMC Cary - Supporting Louisburg

When the new president of Louisburg College, Dr. Michael Clyburn, gave a message at First UMC in Cary last fall, the United Methodist Men (UMM) of the church used the opportunity to present a \$1,000 check to Dr. Clyburn for Louisburg's scholarship fund. Each year the UMM donate a scholarship to one of the three related colleges in the conference. The donation is in honor of the First UMC's music director, David Marlette, and his wife, Phyllis. The church most recently has contributed to the Windows on Education program at Louisburg. Shown is Dr. Clyburn (left) receiving the check from Vance Miller (right), a member of the UMM. The Rev. Rodney Hamm, First UMC senior pastor, (center) assisted in the presentation.

## All God's Children UMC- 10th Anniversary

All God's Children UMC in Aulander celebrated its 10 year anniversary on December 21 with a church filled with over 150 people. Dr. Chris Hughes, of Pfeiffer University in Misenheimer, served as guest musician and began the celebration with praise and worship songs. Friends and supporters shared testimonies about how they became a part of the ministries at All God's Children. The congregation was introduced to T.A.G.G. (Talents Are God Given), a newly formed ministry group of steppers. Following the service, the congregation viewed "The Light of Christ," Christmas lights given in honor or memory of loved ones by the congregation. The Rev. Laura Early is pastor.



## Wesley's Chapel UMC - Bus paid in full

Wesley's Chapel of Elizabethtown purchased a new 33 passenger bus in March 2007. The bus transports 29 students each day to the church for their afterschool program and also undergirds other church programs. The bus purchase was made possible by the combination of the congregation's initial donations, a \$20,000 program grant from Duke Endowment and a \$30,000 bank loan that was paid in full by the congregation in only nine months and was celebrated on Sunday, Jan. 13.

## Submitting Around the Conference Information

Items can be submitted to [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org). The deadline is the 5th day of the month. All articles and photos subject to editing. Photographs or art should be recorded in the largest size and highest resolution possible and sent in JPG or TIFF formats.



# 

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## Bishop Gwinn announces cabinet-level changes

By Bill Norton \*

Six district superintendent changes and the director of connexional ministries in the North Carolina Conference have been announced by Bishop Alfred Wesley Gwinn, Jr. Within these changes, two superintendents will move to different cabinet appointments.

All changes are effective July 1, as well as other clergy appointment changes that will be announced on June 14, the last day of Annual Conference which meets June 11-14, in Greenville.

Appointments are for one year but can be extended for a number of years. District superintendents normally serve six year terms but no more than eight years. The maximum number of years anyone can serve as a district superintendent is 12 years in a lifetime.

Going to cabinet level appointments are Carl Frazier, Sam Wynn, Mack McMillan, Steve Compton, and Powell Osteen. Tim Russell and Carol Goehring, currently on the cabinet, will move to other positions.

See "Changes made" page 4



Children, choir members and other members of New Hope UMC (Elizabeth City District) formed a procession as part of the church's observance of Palm Sunday. Over 50 people participated in the procession, waving palms and carrying banners representing the 12 tribes of Israel.

Palm Sunday marks Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem 2,000 years ago, when, according to the Bible, people placed palm branches on the road to welcome Him. On March 16, children and adults in churches throughout Perquimans County heard the story of Jesus' return to Jerusalem riding on the back of a donkey.

It's an annual story for the start of the Christian Holy Week. But in the New Hope community, children and adults lived the walk to Jerusalem as they took part in a re-enactment of Palm Sunday with Jesus' entering Jerusalem and going to the cross.

"It was like living in a Bible story," said Lindsay Chambers, head of the children's ministry. "The children were very excited about being part of the procession and waving their palms as they greeted Jesus."

The Rev. Bill Masciangelo, pastor of New Hope UMC, blessed the venture and the procession. Many of the members wore clothing of that period. They carried banners representing the 12 tribes of Israel and waved palms as they gathered around Jesus and the donkey.

"The re-enactment of the biblical account of Sunday of the Passion (Palm Sunday) was a reminder to all that Jesus is there for everyone. He was there not only 2000 years ago, but He is with us today and everyday. We can identify more with something that we have actually seen and touched," said Masciangelo.



L-R: A family effort: leading the procession into Jerusalem are Jim, Chris (on the donkey), and Jimmy Darnell. Their brother Phil served as a disciple as well. The procession began the Palm Sunday observance at New Hope UMC in Hertford.

## NC Conference youth are second in denominational giving to support YSF

By Sue Ellen Nicholson \*

The North Carolina Conference was second highest in the denomination for the total amount given to Youth Service Fund in 2007. For many years, NC Conference youth have received recognition for giving to the United Methodist Youth Service Fund, ranking in the "Top Ten" for more than the past decade.

Youth Service Fund (YSF) is a mission fund of United Methodist Youth. Youth raise the money that is given to YSF. Youth also determine how that money

is spent. Other young people benefit from the grants that are awarded with YSF monies.

While donations to YSF are made directly by churches and local church youth groups, the North Carolina Conference also makes contributions, raising most of the money through special offerings and fundraising activities at conference youth events.

Of the money raised in each annual conference, 30% is sent to the general church Division on Ministries with Young People. There is a decision-making group representative of the

world-wide church that determines how the money is spent.

The remaining 70% is awarded within the North Carolina Conference. One-third is used in conference youth ministry; one-third is awarded in grants to ministries within the annual conference, and one-third is awarded in grants to ministries outside the annual conference.

Ministries seeking an NC Conference YSF grant must apply by December 15 of each year. The ministries must benefit

See "Youth Service Fund," page 5



# Confirmation events throughout the conference

## Confirmands attend event at Chestnut Ridge

Confirmands from the Burlington District and beyond gathered at Chestnut Ridge Camp & Retreat Center Feb. 29-March 2 to immerse themselves in community, worship, play and conversation.

Fifty-two youth from First :Elon, Hebron, Leasburg, and Resurrection (Durham District); Davis Street, Cedar Grove, Orange Chapel, and Salem (Burlington District); Wake Forest (Raleigh District); and Center (Sanford District) attended the event.

During the weekend, they heard Dr. Gayle Felton talk about the meaning of Baptism and Holy Communion. Dr. Belton Joyner talked about John Wesley and distinctive United Methodist beliefs. The Rev. Lisa Yebuah spoke on Jesus' challenging question to the disciples, "Who do you say that I am?"

The Rev. Ken Hall and the Rev. Jan Thornton-Irvine led a workshop on the Bible and Christian service, and Yebuah led a workshop on worship, including



A group from Salem UMC gathers at Chestnut Ridge's lakeside cross.

topics such as liturgy and prayer.

The Rev. Rhonda Parker and the staff of Chestnut Ridge offered ice-breakers and other activities and meals. The Rev. Duane Partin led worship music.

Between games, talks, worship, late night snacks and s'mores, confirmands found friendship and an the experience of God's presence in and among the gathered community.

"The best part is being outside,"

See "Confirmands," page 5

## Annual NC Conference Confirmation celebration held at Methodist University

By Sue Ellen Nicholson \*

Over 520 youth in confirmation and their adult leaders were present for the Conference Confirmation Celebration held on Sat., March 8 at Methodist University in Fayetteville.

The Rev. Regina Henderson of Harry Hoosier UMC was the overall leader for the day.

Confirmands heard from Conference Youth Vice President James Van Staaldin.

They also viewed a pre-recorded video greeting from UMCOR Deputy General Secretary Sam Dixon.

Presentations were made on the covenant membership vows of prayers, presence, gifts, and service by confirmation classes from Camp Ground UMC, Salem UMC - Fayetteville, St. Luke UMC - Sanford and Pine Valley UMC-Wilmington.

The day's service project involved assembly of health kits for UMCOR,

and lunch was in the university cafeteria.

In the afternoon Bishop Al Gwinn reminded the confirmands that each individual is unique and loved by God and that each person is valued as a part of the body of Christ.

The event concluded with the Bishop presiding over the celebration of Holy Communion.

Confirmands from John Wesley UMC, Grace UMC-Clinton, Solid Rock UMC and Cornerstone UMC gave leadership as communion servers.

The youth praise team from White Plains UMC, *New Spirit*, and their youth director Rob Phillips led in worship music for the day.

The Confirmation Celebration is held annually and serves to remind youth that confirmation is just the beginning of a life-long journey of Christian faith and discipleship.

\*Sue Ellen Nicholson is director of children, youth and young adult ministries.

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## ‘Creating new places for new people’

By Jeanette Pinkston \*

By 2012 the United Methodist denomination could see exponential growth in the number of new churches started in the U.S.

According to the Rev. Karen Greenwaldt, top executive for the General Board of Discipleship, the agency will oversee a collaborative effort of recruiting and training “1000 church leaders who will plant 650 new congregations over the next 4 years.”

While responsibility for actually starting churches rests with annual (regional) conferences, GBOD is committed to training and equipping the new church planters.

“We can reach thousands and millions of new people for Jesus Christ, if we decide to do so. It’s not about church buildings; it’s about creating new places for new people and renewing existing congregations to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout their lifetime,” said Greenwaldt.

### An exciting time

The Rev. Thomas Butcher leads the denomination’s collaborative effort to train 1000 new church planters who will start 650 new churches by 2012.

“This is an exciting time in United Methodism because the focus is on doing something substantial and new, which causes us to look toward the future with hope,” says Butcher.

The movement Butcher leads, the Path 1 Team, defines a new church as:

- Averaging 300 worshippers,
- Being Wesleyan in its mission,
- Willing to plant another church within a decade of starting,

See “New people,” page 14

## Kropp named director of Quail Haven

Randall ‘Randy’ J. Kropp of Pinehurst has been appointed as the new executive director of Quail Haven Village effective Monday, March 3.

Quail Haven Village, a continuing care retirement community located in Pinehurst is owned by Pleasant Living Healthcare, Inc. and managed by United Methodist Retirement Homes, Inc. (UMRH).

Kropp assumes the position formerly held by Myron Dice, who retired.

“We are delighted to have Randy join our team,” said Jonathan Erickson, corporate executive director of UMRH. “He comes to us with a broad base

See “Quail Haven,” page 13

## Older adult ministries plans day-away “Living Life to the Fullest” event for May 14

By Laura Bailey \*

The Annual Day-Away event for Older Adults and individuals working with Older Adults will be held at Garner United Methodist Church on May 14. The theme for the day is “Living Life to the Fullest.” The event is sponsored by the NC Conference Older Adult Ministries Committee.

The schedule begins at 9 a.m. with registration, followed by a short time for gathering and singing. Storytelling by Rusty and Joanie Stanton will be

presented before the group breaks into smaller workshop sections.

Participants can experience two workshops from a variety of topics with leaders from across the NC Conference. Workshops to be offered and instructors are: Your Spiritual Journey: Means of Grace for Seniors: Dr. Chuck Killian, Nutrition and Lifestyle: Dr. Bernice Duffy Johnson, Creative Ways to Contribute to Church Life: Rev. Margaret Hockett, and Coping With Loss: Rev. Mike Davis.

Also, Exercise: Yoga with Mat or

Armchair plus Basic Pilates: Judy Jefferies, Caregiving: Jodi Riddle, Starting or Energizing Your Older Adult Ministries: Susan McGuire, Making Sense Out Of Insurance Policy and Process: Barry Mowbray, The Creative Side of Life: Heather Frazier, and Keeping Seniors Safe: Garner Police Department.

Throughout the day, opportunities to browse the tables in a display area will be provided. These will include

See “Older adult event,” page 5

## Louisburg board of trustees act to assure financial stability

The Louisburg College Board of Trustees took action on Feb. 28 to assure the financial stability of the college.

The action included an authorized transfer of unrestricted funds to reduce the indebtedness of the college by \$2 million.

Last fall the college was warned that it could lose accreditation unless its financial situation improved. Loss of accreditation would seriously impact the availability of financial aid funds at the two-year college.

A financial stabilization plan was presented to the board by Vice President for Finance Belinda Faulkner.

The plan allocates unrestricted funds to reduce indebtedness, restricts short-term borrowing for operations during the academic year, and reduces the cost of debt service.

The plan also assures that short-term borrowing will be repaid from institutional revenues during the calendar year of borrowing.

The plan will utilize the benefits of recent financial restructuring to reduce future short-term debt and assure a positive cash flow.

The trustees thoroughly reviewed the school’s financial status and planning.

Action taken by the trustees outlines an immediate path to financial stability characterized by reduced expenses, debt reduction, and carefully projected revenues.

Louisburg College President Michael Clyburn recently issued a statement to Louisburg College faculty and staff regarding the financial restructuring.

“I am pleased to report that our financial status has improved and the immediate outlook for Louisburg

College is brighter. Thank you for your patience during the implementation of our financial restructuring plan. We are on the right path with the full support of the board of trustees,” Clyburn said.

“The groundwork has been laid for financial planning that brings institutional vitality and confidence about the days ahead,” he added.

### From the EDITOR

Printing of the May issue of the *NCC Christian Advocate* will be delayed approximately one week in order to include news of the 2008 General Conference being held in Fort Worth, TX from April 23 to May 2.

ADVOCATE

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# Changes made in cabinet-level positions *continued from page 1*

## Carl Frazier

The Rev. Carl Frazier will become the Elizabeth City District Superintendent. He currently is senior pastor at Saint Luke United Methodist Church in Sanford.

The current superintendent, the Rev. Won Namkoong who is on Formation Leave, will be appointed to West End UMC in the Sanford District.

Frazier has served pastorates at Pleasant Green in Durham, associate pastor at Trinity in Durham, Battleboro-Clark Street Charge in Battleboro and Rocky Mount, Saint Francis in Cary, Hay Street in Fayetteville, and Saint Luke in Sanford. He has a B.A. degree from Barton College, M.Div. from Duke Divinity School, and D.Min. from Princeton Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Mary Ellen, have two children, one at Duke Divinity School and one at Meredith College.

## Sam Wynn

The Rev. Sam Wynn will become the Fayetteville District Superintendent. He is currently the senior pastor at Hollands UMC in Wake County.

The current superintendent, the Rev. Carol Goehring, will move to another cabinet-level appointment.

Wynn's pastoral appointments in the North Carolina Conference include Pleasant Grove in the Rockingham

District, Clarkton, Bluefield, Grace, New Bern District Superintendent for five years, senior pastor at St. Mark's in Raleigh, and at Holland's near Raleigh. He has a B.A. degree from Pembroke State University, M.Div. from Asbury Theological Seminary, and D.Min. from Drew Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Rosemary, have one son.

## Tim Russell

The Rev. Tim Russell will move from serving as the Wilmington District Superintendent to become the Raleigh District Superintendent.

Ned Hill, the current Raleigh superintendent, will be appointed senior pastor at Edenton Street UMC in Raleigh.

Included in Russell's pastoral appointments are Jerusalem-Zion, St. Paul in Tabor City, associate at Pine Valley in Wilmington, Wrightsville, and Wilmington District Superintendent. He has a bachelor's degree from UNC-Chapel Hill and M.Div. from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Pam, have two children.

## Mack McMillan

The Rev. Mack McMillan will become the Rocky Mount District Superintendent. He currently is the pastor of Saint Luke UMC in

Laurinburg. The current Rocky Mount superintendent, the Rev. Bill Simpson, will be retiring.

Beyond his current appointment at Saint Luke, McMillan has served a student appointment at First: Roanoke Rapids, Pikeville in the Goldsboro District, Mt. Zion in the Raleigh District, Riverside in Elizabeth City, and New Beginnings in Youngsville. He has a bachelor's degree from UNC-Chapel Hill and a D.Min. from Duke Divinity School. He and his wife, Paige, have two children.

## Steve Compton

The Rev. Steve Compton will become the Sanford District Superintendent. He currently is the conference executive director of congregational development. After consultation with conference congregational development leaders and a national search, Bishop Gwinn will appoint a new congregational development director.

The Rev. Milton Gilbert, the current Sanford superintendent, is retiring.

Compton's other pastoral appointments include student pastor at Chestnut Ridge, Salem in Person County, St. Francis in Cary, team leader of the Vitalization Project, and associate director of the Conference Council on Ministries. Compton has an B.A. degree from UNC-Chapel Hill, M.Div. from

Duke Divinity School, and D.Min. from Emory University. He has two adult sons.

## Powell Osteen

The Rev. Powell Osteen will become the Wilmington District Superintendent. He currently is the pastor of Garber UMC in New Bern.

The Rev. Tim Russell, the current superintendent, will become the Raleigh District Superintendent.

Included in his pastoral appointments are: associate at Highland in Raleigh, Resurrection in Durham, and Garber in New Bern. Osteen has a B.A. degree from Duke University and M.Div. from Duke Divinity School. His and his wife, Mary Lynne, have two children.

## Carol Goehring

The Rev. Carol Goehring, currently serving as the Fayetteville District superintendent, will become the executive director of conference connectional ministries.

The current director, the Rev. Charles M. Smith, is retiring.

Her pastoral appointments include associate at Jarvis Memorial in Greenville, Chowan, associate at First: Elizabeth City, Wrightsville Beach, co-pastor at Centenary in New Bern, co-pastor at Jarvis Memorial in Greenville, (both co-pastorates were with her husband, David), and Fayetteville District Superintendent. She has a B.A. degree from Vanderbilt University and M.Div. from Duke Divinity School. She and her husband, David, have two adult children.

David Goehring who currently is the pastor of Southern Pines UMC will become the pastor of Highland UMC in Raleigh.

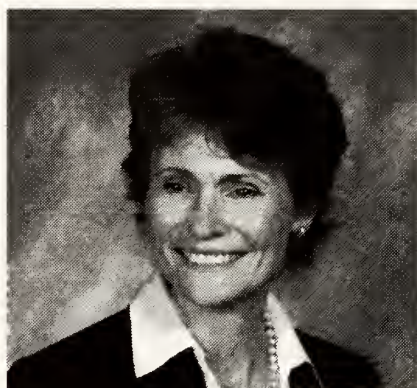
\* Bill Norton is conference director of communications and Advocate editor.



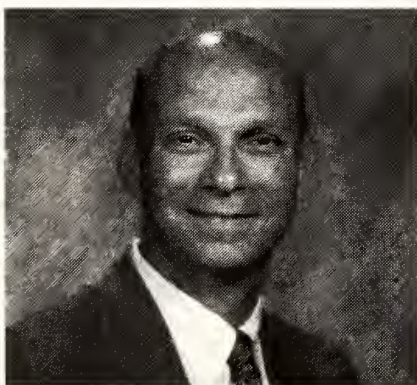
Carl Frazier



Sam Wynn



Carol Goehring



Tim Russell



Powell Osteen



Mack McMillan



Steve Compton



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**Contact:** [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org) or (919) 832-9560 with any questions.



## Youth Service Fund *from page 1*

young people without being part of a typical local church youth program (such as a mission trip).

The Youth Service Fund Task Force makes grant recommendations to the Conference Council on Youth Ministries for final approval.

The YSF Task Force is made up of the conference youth treasurer and one senior high youth representative from each district.

The youth are selected for these leadership positions as part of the Annual Conference Session for Youth (ACS) each year.

Grants from the NC Conference YSF have gone to Positive Attitude Youth Center in Burlington, Harvest of Hope of the Society of St. Andrew, an after-school ministry with Hispanic/Latino children in Oxford.

Grants have also been awarded to Footprints Youth Camps at the MERCI Mission Center, Zimbabwe Orphans Endeavor, Carolina Cross Connection in western NC, the Jubilee Project in Tennessee, and projects for young people in Uganda and Ghana.

These are just some of the ministries supported by YSF from the NC Conference. Information about YSF is available at the Conference youth ministry webpage: [www.nccumc.org/youthministry](http://www.nccumc.org/youthministry).

A new DVD describing the Youth Service Fund is available to local churches in the Conference Media Center (visit <http://www.nccumc.org/mediacenternew07/defaultmc.htm>).

Local church contributions to YSF also serve for one of the lanes in the Rainbow Covenant mission giving program (visit [http://nccmission.org/rainbow\\_covenant.htm](http://nccmission.org/rainbow_covenant.htm)).

*\* Sue Ellen Nicholson is conference director of children, youth, and young adult ministries.*



## Youth lay speaker training held

The fourth annual Youth Lay Speaker Training was held on Saturday, Feb. 9 with just over 30 youth attending. Conference Director of Lay Speaking Ministries Linda Harris led the training.

The training affords youth the opportunity to explore aspects of leading, caring and communicating within the life of the church. Youth who participate in the training and who speak during the course give powerful testimony to their faith and the significance of the church's influence in their lives.

The annual event is sponsored by the Conference Council on Youth Ministries.

## Confirmands explore at Camp Chestnut Ridge *from page 2*

said one participant as she sat by the campfire.

Confirmands also participated in the camp's activities such as canoeing, tree climbing, working in the garden, playing basketball, and taking hayrides.

Confirmand Tammy Doles of Hebron UMC said, "This was a really fun retreat. I'm so glad I got the opportunity to come and experience meeting new people and just having fun."

"I think that all of the outdoor activities were very fun, and the food was excellent. The speakers were all very great, and if you listened, you would learn...thanks for the opportunity," she added.

On Sunday morning, the group celebrated a closing commissioning service and Holy Communion by the lakeside.

The Rev. Bill Gattis, Burlington District Superintendent, gave the morning message.

The confirmands left with a deeper understanding of what it means to bear the name "Christian" to the world.

To receive information about participating in a confirmation retreat at Chestnut Ridge next year, contact Rhonda Parker at [rhonda@campchestnutridge.org](mailto:rhonda@campchestnutridge.org).

## Older adult event *from page 3*

Cokesbury resources plus informational displays from other organizations of interest to Older Adults.

The day will conclude with a worship service led by Dr. F. Belton Joyner, Jr., retired elder and author of a growing list of titles, such as *The Unofficial United Methodist Handbook* and *Being Methodist in the Bible Belt*.

There is easy access to Garner UMC. All classes and activities of the day will take place on the same floor.

Registration brochures are available online at [www.nccumc.org/OlderAdultMinistries/spiritualjourney.htm](http://www.nccumc.org/OlderAdultMinistries/spiritualjourney.htm), by calling Laura Bailey at 1-800-849-4433, ext. 264, or by emailing [llbailey@nccumc.org](mailto:llbailey@nccumc.org). The postmark deadline for registrations is April 23.

*\* Laura Bailey is conference staff representative to the NC Conference Older Adult Ministries Committee.*



Greensburg, Kansas, Saturday, May 5, 2007.

## Christmas in New York December 2 - 5, 2008

Join the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas in New York Theater Party. Travel to the Big Apple for theater, fine dining, and time to explore. Stay at the wonderfully located *Edison Hotel*, eat at *Tavern on the Green* and see the *Radio City Christmas Spectacular*, featuring the world famous Rockettes, *Billy Elliott*, *In The Heights* and *Phantom of the Opera*. Register Early and Save.

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**Upcoming events  
throughout the Conference**

## Nominate an Acts 2 church, submit form by April 15

Churches are invited to consider being named an Acts 2 church in response to Bishop Al Gwinn's challenge to have 200 such churches recognized at Annual Conference. Criteria for determining Acts 2 churches and an application form were developed to identify congregational initiatives and witness in four areas:

1. Radical Hospitality,
2. Passionate Worship,
3. Intention Spiritual Formation,
4. Risk-Taking Mission and Ministry to the World.

The deadline for having a completed form returned to the district office is April 15. Information and an application form are available at: <http://www.nccumc.org/docs/acts2.htm>.

## Training to recognize and respond to domestic violence

Duke Divinity School and Duke University Health System will co-sponsor "Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault: Providing Competent Medical and Spiritual Care" Saturday, April 12 at Durham Regional Hospital. The day-long event is for anyone who is interested in improving their ability to recognize and respond appropriately to abuse in their professional and personal capacities.

There will be an emphasis on the spiritual impact of abuse. CEU credit is available for completion of the program. The general registration fee is \$20 which includes breakfast and lunch and \$10 for students. For more information and a copy of the brochure, call 919-684-4293 or email [candice.ryals@duke.edu](mailto:candice.ryals@duke.edu).

## David Crowder Band show to benefit MU campus ministry

On Sunday, April 13 Methodist University is sponsoring the David Crowder Band in concert at the Crown Coliseum in Fayetteville. Individual and group tickets go on sale this month (February). Proceeds from the concert support campus ministry and mission projects of Methodist University.

Contact the University Relations and Campus Ministry Office at Methodist University for information on purchasing tickets (910) 630-7515.

## Resource event planned for children's ministry April 19 & 23

"Let the Children Come," a resource event for leaders in local church children's ministry (especially medium to smaller churches) will be held on two dates at two locations in the Conference this year: Saturday, April 19 at Salem UMC (Greenville District) and Saturday, Aug. 23 at Page Memorial UMC (Aberdeen-Sanford District).

Pre-registration is not required and there is no cost to attend the event. The events will run from 9:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. each date. A detailed flyer including the event schedule, lists of workshops being offered and other information is available at <http://www.nccumc.org/childrnmin/letthemcome08.pdf>.

## Laity weekend: Forgiving our enemies - the test of true faith

Duke Laity Weekend is April 25-26. Laity Weekend is an opportunity for laity of all communions to cultivate their faith through focused study with leading Divinity School faculty.

The weekend begins on Friday featuring Mickey Efird, dinner, keynote lecture with Dr. J. Warren Smith and continues with four morning and four afternoon classes to choose from on Saturday. This program is sponsored by the Center for Continuing Education at Duke Divinity School.

For a complete schedule, class listings and to register online, visit the web site <http://www.divinity.duke.edu/learningforlife/programs/laityweekend>.

## Conference Youth Rally Day at NC Wesleyan on April 27

Youth Rally Day will be Sunday, April 27 at NC Wesleyan College in Rocky Mount from 3-6 p.m. Youth groups are invited to enjoy the time of recreation, fellowship and worship. The ECU Wesley Foundation Praise Team and Wesley Singers will provide music. Youth groups are invited to sponsor recreational activities or offer an act of worship. The youth group of Northwoods UMC will provide a prayer labyrinth.

There is no cost to attend Rally Day (although refreshments will be available for purchase and an offering will be taken for Youth Service Fund) and groups do not need to pre-register to attend. More information about Rally Day can be found at Youth Ministry.

## Three more Disciple Bible training sessions in 2008

This year's DBOM DISCIPLE Bible Study training initiative schedule has now been set. Training events in the NC Conference will take place in the following districts: May 10: Rocky Mount District - Nashville UMC; May 17: Durham District - McMannen UMC; and May 24: Elizabeth City District - First UMC: Elizabeth City.

Training in all four levels of DISCIPLE Bible Study and the RINGS OF FELLOWSHIP youth study will be provided at these events. The event is free to all lay and clergy persons. Lunch will be provided for a small fee. Registration is required. For more details and to register, go to [www.disciplebibleoutreach.org](http://www.disciplebibleoutreach.org).

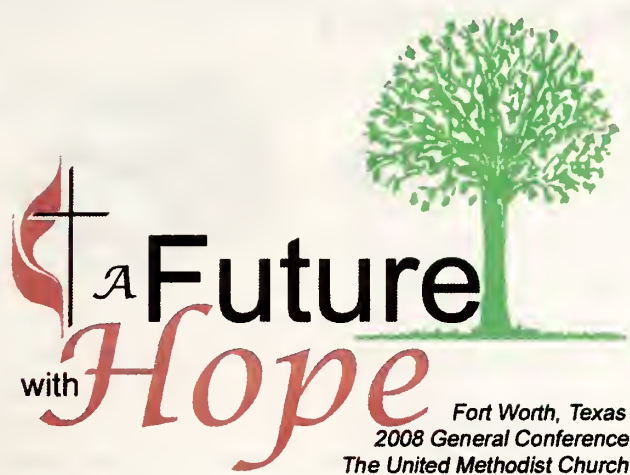
## Hearing accessibility conference coming on May 31

A conference on hearing accessibility is set for Saturday, May 31, from 10am - 3pm at Garner UMC in Garner. The event is sponsored by the North Carolina Conference Committee on Disability Concerns.

Registration is required by May 23. An early bird registration fee of \$15 is available to anyone signing up by May 1. After May 1, the registration fee is \$20. Lunch is included.

To learn more about the event and obtain registration information, visit the web site <http://nccmentalhealth.org/hearing.htm> or call John Crowe at (919) 759-2146.





# Get Involved with General Conference

## Final NCC listening sessions

The NCC delegates are inviting clergy and lay members to attend a General Conference listening session. These sessions give the NC Conference delegation to General Conference an opportunity to listen to clergy and laity express their concerns or opinions on the specific issues that will be before the Conference.

The listening sessions are not designed for debate but to help delegates better understand where members stand on the issues.

Sessions in other districts took place in February and March.

### April Listening Sessions:

April 6 at 3 p.m. —

Elizabeth City: First UMC

April 6 at 4 p.m. — Durham: Epworth UMC

April 13 at 4 p.m. —

Aberdeen: Page Memorial UMC

## GC delegates to consider over 1,500 petitions

By J. Richard Peck \*

Nearly 1,000 delegates to the United Methodist General Conference are now wading through 1,564 pieces of proposed legislation to be considered during the April 23-May 2 meeting in Fort Worth, Texas.

On Feb. 15, United Methodist Publishing House mailed 1,540 copies of the *Advance Edition of the Daily Christian Advocate* to delegates, first alternates, bishops and others. Portuguese and French editions later were sent to delegates in Africa.

Delegates received a 157-page *Handbook for Delegates*, which includes the proposed plan of organization and rules of order for the assembly and a listing of delegates and committee assignments.

They also received the hefty two-volume *Advance DCA*, which includes reports from churchwide agencies and proposed legislation. The page count is 1,560, up from 1,411 in 2004.

See "Delegates to consider," page 8

## 2008 General Conference welcomes online visitors

UMNS - People unable to attend the 2008 United Methodist General Conference in Fort Worth, Texas, still can watch the proceedings and gather related information online with Internet access.

Since the 2004 assembly in Pittsburgh, United Methodist Communications has expanded and upgraded its Internet capability to meet users' needs and expectations, said the Rev. Larry Hollon, the agency's top executive.

"The Internet is the window into the General Conference for people around the world," said Hollon. "Live video and audio streaming offer an opportunity to view and listen to many of the proceedings of the General Conference."

About 1,000 delegates from around the world will gather April 23-May 2 to set direction for the 11.5 million-member denomination.

### GC2008.umc.org

The proceedings will be available through the denomination's web site GC2008.umc.org and on the NC Conference web site nccumc.org.

Worship services, special addresses, celebrations and other selected sessions will be made available on live video streaming.

"We are confident we will not have the issues that affected many who followed General Conference on the Internet four years ago," said Hollon.

The denomination's web sites often were overloaded during the 2004 meeting, resulting in shutdowns and lengthy delays in accessing information.

After 2004's General Conference, United Methodist Communications selected Kintera Inc., a San Diego-based software service provider, to host the church's Web site. Through Kintera, Hollon said, high volumes of Web traffic can be handled to meet the demands of a growing Web audience.

"Kintera is focused on continually providing our clients with the software they need to meet their mission," said Scott Crowder, chief technology officer for Kintera.

"Kintera's fault-tolerant and redundant data centers help to ensure that clients like United Methodist Communications can safely increase Web traffic without sacrificing performance."

### Multimedia resources

Significant multimedia resources related to the 2008 General Conference already are available online

at GC2008.umc.org.

Among them are video and audio recordings of panel discussions from the Pre-General Conference News Briefing, held in January in Fort Worth and sponsored by United Methodist Communications to provide information to delegates and journalists about significant issues facing General Conference.

Additional informational videos are available about General Conference, and related news stories also are posted at the General Conference Web site, as well as through UM News Service (umns.umc.org).

The January-February issue of *Interpreter Magazine*, the denomination's official ministry magazine, focused on the 2008 meeting and featured stories on how previous General Conference sessions have shaped The United Methodist Church.

The articles are available online at <http://www.interpretermagazine.org>.

### Exploring General Conference

Anyone wanting to learn more about General Conference and how it works can take a free five-session online course called "Exploring General Conference" through United Methodist Communications.

To register, visit <http://training.umcom.org>. More than 600 people have already done so.

### Daily e-mail digests & RSS feed

During General Conference, United Methodist Communications will send a daily e-mail digest of UMNS assembly coverage to anyone who subscribes to the free service.

The agency also will provide an RSS feed allowing church and annual conference Web sites to list General Conference headlines as UMNS stories are posted.

Coverage will include print stories in English, Spanish and Korean; video stories; audio newscasts; and a General Conference photo gallery.

### E-mail and phone questions

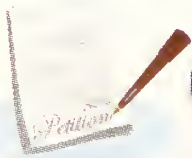
InfoServ, the church's free information service, will staff the meeting and respond to questions by e-mail at [infoserv@umcom.org](mailto:infoserv@umcom.org), as well as by phone.

"We live in a different Web world in 2008. We learned from 2004, and we are benefiting from expanding technology," Hollon said.

"We are better prepared. We have the right systems in place, and we have the right people positioned to deal with any issues."



## General Conference Petition Process



SECRETARY

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GENERAL  
CONFERENCE



UMMS Graphic by Joy Paday

## Delegates to consider over 1,500 petitions continued from page 7

Most petitions sent by agencies, annual conferences, local churches and individuals propose changes in the *Book of Discipline*, which is the church's book of law, and also in the *Book of Resolutions*, which outlines the church's positions on social-justice issues.

These petitions are assigned by subject matter or disciplinary paragraph to one of 14 legislative committees. Committee members consider each petition and then recommend approval as submitted, approval as amended, or they recommend defeating the petition.

When a petition not involving money or a change in the denomination's Constitution receives 10 or fewer negative votes, it is placed on a time-saving consent calendar and is voted on as a bloc along with other non-controversial proposals.

Since so many petitions relate to social justice issues, these 414 petitions are assigned to two Church and Society legislative committees. The Legislative Committee on Ministry and Higher Education will consider 229 petitions, the highest number of petitions assigned to any single legislative committee.

### The petition process

The Rev. Gary Graves, a pastor in Beaver Dam, KY, serves as petitions secretary and is responsible for sorting and filing all petitions. While there are nearly 1,600 different pieces of proposed legislation, many submissions were identical.

Graves is grateful for petitioners who used e-mail submissions, decreasing the number of boxes of "snail mail" to his office from 47 in 2003 to just over two boxes in 2007.

For the last assembly, Graves shipped 18 boxes of petitions to the site of General Conference.

This year, he will ship four boxes to Fort Worth and the rest of the petitions will be handled electronically.

Here is a roundup highlighting some of the petitions to be considered this spring:

### Reorganization

The most far-reaching petition comes from a six-member task force proposing a constitutional amendment to make the church's five U.S. jurisdictions into a regional body, similar to the church's central conferences outside of the US. (See "Methodists explore church's global structure," page 9 for more.)

### Homosexuality

The issue that seems to grab most of the headlines also received the highest number of petitions. Petitions from 616 groups or individuals ask General Conference to make no change in the existing statements on homosexuality within the church's Social Principles. That statement declares homosexuals "individuals of sacred worth," but declares the practice of homosexuality "incompatible with Christian teaching."

The United Methodist Board of Church and Society, the church's social action agency, is asking the assembly to delete the incompatibility clause and replace it with: "While Christians of good faith differ on what Christian teaching reveals regarding gender and homosexuality, we affirm God's grace is available to all." The Iowa Annual (regional) Conference offers a similar petition.

Another 326 petitioners are asking delegates to make no change in the present statement supporting laws that define marriage as the "union of one man and one woman." However, petitions wanting to delete that clause are from the Board of Church and Society along with the Kansas East, Northern Illinois, Minnesota, California-Nevada, Oregon-Idaho, New England, California-Pacific and New York conferences.

### Abortion

The Church now recognizes the "sanctity of unborn human life" but also respects the "life and well-being of the mother, for whom devastating damage may result from an unacceptable pregnancy." Seventy-six petitions want to replace the words "an unacceptable" with "a life threatening." Another 322 petitions want to make it clear that abortion is only acceptable if the "physical death of the mother" would result from the "continuation of a pregnancy."

A total of 370 petitions, including the North Carolina and Northwest Texas conferences, call for churchwide agencies to withdraw their membership from the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice. They argue that the church opposes partial birth abortion while the coalition supports the practice.

Eighty petitions, including one from the Mississippi conference, ask for a resolution supporting the coalition to be deleted from the *Book of Resolutions*. A total of 375 petitions support parental notification if an abortion is being considered.

### Health care

The Board of Church and Society wants the church to call for legislation which will "entitle all persons within the borders of the United States to the provision of health care services, the cost of such services to be equally shared by American taxpayers." Public funds would be generated by individual premiums and a payroll tax.

### New hymnal

The Board of Discipleship and the UM Publishing House are asking delegates to authorize the creation of a 27-member Hymnal Revision Committee to "prepare and present to the 2012 General Conference a single-volume hymn and worship book."

The discipleship agency also wants the assembly to create a nine-member committee to study the possibility of publishing "an official UM hymnal for North American Christians of African descent in the Wesleyan heritage."

That agency also wants to continue the Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century initiative—a program started in 1996 and renewed by the following two General Conferences.

### Finances

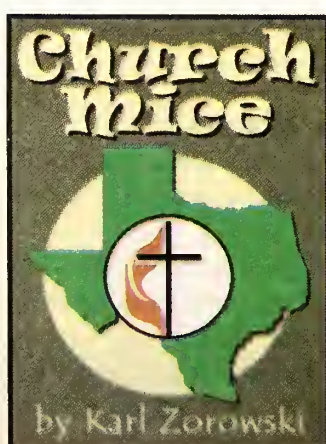
The General Council on Finance and Administration will propose a denominational budget of nearly \$642 million for the 2009-2012 period, up 4.8 percent. That four-year total includes \$333 million for World Service, a 4.96 percent increase for ministries of churchwide agencies.

The proposed budget for the operation of bishops' offices would increase 13 percent to more than \$94 million. The administrative cost of operating GCFA, General Conference, Judicial Council and the Commission on Archives and History would total nearly \$37 million, up almost 9 percent from the 2005-2008 period.

### To learn more

A full listing of all petitions is scheduled to be available on the General Conference Web site at <http://gc2008.umc.org>.

\* Richard Peck is a retired clergy member of New York Annual Conference and has attended 10 General Conferences, four of which he served as the editor of The Daily Christian Advocate.





# GC assembly music leaders branch out together

By Linda Green \*

UMNS - The tree on the logo for the 2008 United Methodist General Conference is serving as the inspiration for the music and worship directors of this spring's gathering in Fort Worth, Texas.

It is also a symbol for how Mark Miller, of Plainfield, N.J., and Marcia McFee of Truckee, Calif., are branching out creatively as they design the worship experiences for the April 23-May 2 gathering.

McFee and Miller said their plans for the church's top legislative assembly were shaped by the logo and the theme "A Future with Hope." The logo was inspired by Jeremiah 29:11 and designed by Polly Shafer of Pine Bluff, Ark.



Marcia McFee and Mark Miller rehearse before a November 2007 worship service with the Council of Bishops. They are co-directors of music and worship for the 2008 General Conference. UMNS photo by Harry Leake.

## Lightning bolt of inspiration

McFee suggested using trees salvaged from Hurricane Katrina-damaged Gulfside Assembly, a UM retreat center in Waveland, Miss., for the altar, Communion table, pulpit and baptismal font.

"It came to me like a lightning bolt," she said.

"It was like throwing it in a wood chipper, and it all comes out in this amazing, holistic way that is connected," said Miller. "The music feeds into Scripture, Scripture feeds into images, which feed into who are involved."

The holistic principle is evident in how Miller and McFee have teamed up for the assignment of leading worship for General Conference.

Each has a lengthy resume, as well as experience leading worship at annual and jurisdictional conferences. With General Conference, they decided their individual skills would blend well.

"We complement one another because we have different skill sets (that) enable each of us to do what we do better by working together," McFee said.

The Rev. David Wilson, vice chairperson of the program committee for the Commission on General Conference, said Miller and McFee were selected because "they bring so much talent, energy and experience to this position" and that together "their creativity would enhance the worship experience."

"Each brings their own unique experience when leading worship. Combining talents like theirs would create an amazing worship experience for the General Conference, and we certainly believe that they will," he said.

## Seeds planted

Throughout the assembly, the worship experiences will use the symbolism of the tree to maximum effect.

The tree is the symbol of "our salvation in a very deep sense," Miller said.

But the image of the tree planted by the river of light to heal the nation, as found in the Book of Revelation, is most significant, he said. He hopes the conference will help lead to a "healing of the nations."

To emphasize the church's global nature, trees from around the world will be used during worship. Each

day, a bishop will lead a prayer, and a tree from his or her episcopal area will be projected on a screen behind the altar.

The harvest from seeds planted last fall will be used as part of the General Conference worship space. In 2007, McFee distributed envelopes of seeds on which people wrote prayers, and the seeds were planted by churches in the Fort Worth area.

## Connecting the connection

"We are trying to connect the whole connection to our worship at General Conference," she said. McFee and Miller also found numerous songs about trees and seeds from across the world as they mined songbooks.

Worship will include more visuals and use of technology to give delegates and visitors a multisensory worship and singing experience.

"We will use a lot of imagery and bring some of what is happening in new frontiers in worship into our setting," McFee said.

Exploring new frontiers is nothing new for McFee, who is the author of *The Worship Workshop: Creative Ways to Design Worship Together*, an interactive resource for worship teams and published by Abingdon Press.

She has preached, taught and led worship at a variety of United Methodist gatherings in the United States, Europe and Asia as well as for events for other denominations.

## Loosening up delegates

A two-time delegate to General Conference, Miller said he has had experience with the kind of spirit that pervades the gathering of nearly 1,000 delegates. He wants to help the delegates "loosen up."

"Having been there and felt that, I feel like I have a better handle on what we are facing," he said. "Hopefully there will be different key points where I can help people remember not to take themselves so seriously and remember that they are not in control but that God is."

# United Methodists explore church's global structure

By Linda Green \*

UMNS - Would making The United Methodist Church in the U.S. a regional body be the best way for the denomination to function as a worldwide body?

Ten speakers explored that question during a Jan. 25 panel discussion on "The Worldwide Nature of the Church: What It Means" during the Pre-General Conference News Briefing sponsored by United Methodist Communications.

During General Conference, the 2008 assembly will consider proposed structural changes to the denomination that acknowledge the fact that the church is growing outside of the United States and that 30 percent of United Methodist members now live outside the United States.

Proponents say the structural changes would make the church more effective and equitably organized for worldwide ministry.

Opponents say the changes may actually serve to fragment the denomination into national entities, among other things.

A task force examining the issue has proposed four substantive changes to the denomination's constitution in an effort to make regional and jurisdictional structures similar worldwide.

Task force members say the current structure gives the U.S. church too much influence and marginalizes United Methodists in Africa, Asia and Europe.

The constitutional changes would pave the way so that legislation could be proposed to the 2012 assembly that would eliminate U.S. concerns from General Conference. Those concerns instead would become the business of a U.S. regional conference.

Specifically, the legislation would make the church's five jurisdictions in the United States a regional body, similar to the church's central conferences that currently exist outside of the U.S.

The six-member task force sent 24 petitions to General Conference to make changes in 24 paragraphs of the constitution.

Most of these changes are grammatical or change the words "central conference" to "regional conference."

To read the Task Force report and proposed petitions, visit the web site <http://worldwideumc.org>.

The committee, chaired by Nebraska Bishop Ann Sherer, also will ask General Conference to allow the task force and the Connectional Table to jointly continue their study of the church's worldwide nature and report to the 2012 legislative assembly.

Kansas Bishop Scott Jones, a task force member, said the proposal does not change the number, purpose and function of jurisdictional conferences; the way bishops



"Our war-torn and broken world needs a better model of unity and interdependence," said Bishop Ann Sherer. UMNS photo by Marta Aldrich.



# Task force recommends ways to improve health

By Deborah White \*

UMNS - A new unified effort to improve the health of clergy and lay employees of The United Methodist Church will be recommended by an inter-agency denominational health task force when the 2008 General Conference meets in April.

The task force formed after the 2004 General Conference directed the United Methodist Board of Pension and Health Benefits to examine the feasibility of a mandatory health insurance plan for the denomination.

Currently, HealthFlex, the denomination's voluntary health insurance plan, covers slightly more than half of the church's annual (regional) conferences in the United States.

After an in-depth study, task force members concluded that they could not recommend a mandatory plan.

Instead, they made four recommendations to confront health issues by changing *The Book of Discipline*, the church's book of rules and by-laws.

The recommendations were among

changes outlined during the United Methodist Pre-General Conference News Briefing, an informational session.

"Friends, we do have a health problem," Barbara Boigegrain, top executive of the Board of Pension and Health Benefits, told briefing participants during the "Healthy People, Healthy Church" panel discussion.

"A mandatory health plan across the United States only scratches the surface of the issue, doesn't get at the deeper issues, and there was not consensus among conferences that that in fact would be helpful," Boigegrain said.

"The real issue is broader and deeper than health insurance. It's about a health malaise across the denomination."

## Red flags

Boigegrain said trends in medical and disability claims data of United Methodist clergy and lay employees in the United States are raising red flags.

Weight and cardiac disease are higher than the national average. The diabetes rate is twice the national average.

Chronic arthritis is rising rapidly.



General Conference delegates and communicators practice Sign Chi Do, a stress management exercise taught at the United Methodist Pre-General Conference News Briefing. UMNS photo by Marta W. Aldrich.

And 54 percent of disabilities include mental/nervous diagnoses.

"Although health care costs are an issue, the real issue is health," said Tracy Merrick, chairperson of the Denominational Health Task Force.

"We can deal with various health insurance matters. But until we deal with the root issue of health, we will continue to have issues of health insurance coverage."

## Stress-related diseases

The task force discovered that the denomination pays "16 percent more for health coverage than another entity would," Merrick said.

"We asked ourselves, 'What is it that should cause this sort of differential?' We discovered a very, very high incidence of stress-related diseases—high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, depression, gastrointestinal disease and neuro-muscular disorders."

In petitions to General Conference, the task force will recommend that the assembly:

- Direct the Board of Pension and Health Benefits, annual conferences and general church agencies to share data from health insurance plans and to establish denomination-wide wellness guidelines;
- Establish a task force to examine employment systems and culture and to provide guidelines for sustaining a healthy work/life balance during ministry. Systems to be examined include itinerancy, appointment-making, supervision and processes for entering and exiting ministry;
- Require access to group health insurance plans for bishops, full-time clergy and full-time lay employees; and
- Require access for retired bishops, annual conference clergy and lay employees to Medicare supplemental plans and prescription drug plans.

See "Ways to improve," page 11

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**Hunter Bradley**  
Hunter has been working with youth for over twenty years. He currently is the Director of Youth Ministries at Colonial Heights United Methodist Church. He resides in Kingsport, Tenn., with his wife of 21 years, Diane, and their two sons, Tyler, 15, and Tanner, 12.

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# Ways to improve health

continued from page 10

"We are proposing these recommendations so we can be more effective," Merrick said.

"It is our hope that through healthy living our witness of God will be unmistakable, and we will be much more highly effective disciples for the transformation of the world."

## Mississippi's Amazing Pace

Another panelist, Bishop Hope Morgan Ward, described how the Mississippi Annual Conference is encouraging wellness through its Amazing Pace program.

In 2007, 650 clergy members and a few lay people signed up for the program, which encourages physical activity with high-tech pedometers that download information directly to a computer.

In two 10-week Amazing Pace sessions, measureable results have included 626 pounds lost, 1,050 blood pressure points dropped, higher well-care visits and better compliance for chronic medical conditions.

"And our health care costs are running 33 percent less for Amazing Pace participants than for non-participants," Ward said.

"Our goal is increased activity because we are learning that no matter what our size or weight, increased activity is the dynamic that leads to stronger health," Ward said. "And we are having a lot of fun doing it."

## Healthful moments

During the news briefing, four "healthful moments" featured Dr. Anne Borik of Phoenix leading Sign Chi Do, a new stress-management exercise program she developed.

"Relaxing is not the same thing as collapsing," said Borik as she introduced exercises that incorporate sign language, breathing, movement and music.

Borik will teach relaxation techniques at General Conference at an inter-agency health task force exhibit, which also will include blood pressure checks and a variety of health information.

"I hope some of you are training for General Conference," said Larry Hollon, chief executive of United Methodist Communications, as he introduced the health panel at the briefing.

Bishop Hope Morgan Ward shares success stories from the "Amazing Pace" program in the Mississippi Annual (regional) Conference. UMNS photo by Larry Nelson.



"It's been my experience it's one of the most grueling experiences I go through ... and it requires some physical training."

In a question and answer session, the Rev. Laura Easto, a clergy delegate from the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference recalled, "Four years ago I experienced that as one of the most grueling experiences of my life."

"We are captive in the convention center. We will eat what is provided for us," said Easto.

"We will sleep little, and we will go long into the night unless someone stands with strength of voice and says this is no longer how we're going to do business," Easto said, noting that this year's General Conference schedule does not allow for a Sabbath day.

Boige grain replied that members of the denominational task force met with members of the General Conference host committee.

"They were extremely receptive," she said. "I hope you will say you are noticing some places and some interventions where there is intentionality about trying to focus on health."

The inter-agency health exhibit is a first step, Boige grain said. "I hope it helps. It's not anywhere near where it needs to be as far as extremely long days and working through the Sabbath. But it's a first step."

Details of the task force's recommendations are available at [www.gbophb.org/resources/gc2008.asp](http://www.gbophb.org/resources/gc2008.asp), and an audio recording of the "Healthy People, Healthy Church" panel discussion is available at [www.gc2008.umc.org](http://www.gc2008.umc.org).

*\* Deborah White is associate editor of Interpreter Magazine and a member of the leadership team that plans the annual UM health ministries conference.*

# GC seating chart

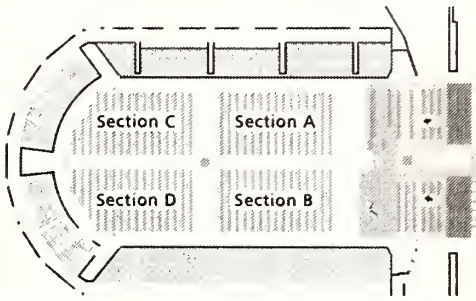
The 20 delegates from the North Carolina Conference will be seated in North Carolina Section A, rows 9 and 10.

Delegations seated in the back half of the assembly hall in Pittsburgh in 2004 will be in the front half in Fort Worth.

The Commission on General Conference places the names of 2004 delegations seated in the back half in a hat; commission members pull the names, with those first drawn gaining a seat on the front

row. The names of delegations that occupied front row seats in 2004 are drawn only after the other names have been drawn.

The delegation from Nigeria will be in the first row at the 2008 gathering.



# Music leaders collaborate from page 9

Like McFee, Miller has been a worship leader, teacher and performer of sacred and gospel music across the church. He is director of music and instructor of church music at the Drew Theological School, Madison, N.J., and minister of music at Covenant United Methodist Church in Plainfield. He is also a lecturer at the Institute of Sacred Music at Yale University, New Haven, Conn. He has directed music for numerous annual conferences and youth events, and he has composed hymns.

According to Miller, individuals may engage in personal devotion, but worship is "gathering with people to have an encounter with God."

McFee defines worship as a place where people are transformed and made one in Jesus Christ. "The intentional crafting of the liturgy, the pronounced words and the way the words dance with the music and rituals are formative and moving," she said.

"If those pieces can really form us as a people who are in dialogue together

and know that the spirit is moving among us and that God is present in a powerful way and that Jesus is walking with us, then we would have done something grounding for the whole body," she added.

## Sharing diverse gifts

The services will include many people sharing their musical gifts, including a 23-member children's choir from Uganda, techno-drummers, a deaf choir, a praise band, and choirs from Texas and across the United States. Music will

encompass a variety of genres—Gaelic, Celtic, rap, contemporary gospel, spirituals and traditional hymns—as well as songs in African, Spanish and Korean languages.

"We are trying to sing songs from all over the globe," McFee said.

"Our role is to help people have an encounter with God," said Miller.

*\* Linda Green is a UM News Service news writer based in Nashville, TN.*

**"We will use a lot of imagery and bring some of what is happening in new frontiers in worship into our setting."**

**— Marcia McFee**

# Global structure considered from page 9

are elected or assigned; the purpose or mission of any church-wide agency; the size or power of General Conference; the way the Social Principles are decided upon or amended; or the apportionment formulas and allocations.

## Ratification process

If General Conference approves the proposed constitutional amendments by a two-thirds majority, annual conferences would be asked to vote on the 24 proposed changes.

The exact tally would have to be reported in order for the Council of Bishops to determine whether a two-thirds majority of

all annual conference members had been attained. Jones told UM News Service that the manner in which these votes are taken would be decided by the presiding bishop.

Members of the global nature task force were appointed by the Council of Bishops and the Connectional Table.

The members are Sherer, Jones, Bishop Ruediger Minor, Kristina Gonzalez, Forbes Matonga and Dora Washington.

Bishop Sharon Zimmerman Rader serves as staff executive.

*\* Linda Green is a UM News Service news writer based in Nashville, TN.*

## Contact the NCC Delegation

To e-mail the entire NC Conference General Conference Delegation write to:  
[ncgeneral\\_conference@listserv.nccumc.org](mailto:ncgeneral_conference@listserv.nccumc.org)





By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

May 4, 2008

Text: Haggai 1; Ezra 5  
"The Temple Rebuilt"

If you want to play a mean trick on someone—who, me?—you might try this. Without any advance notice, ask him or her to read this week's lesson to the class. You will enjoy as your victim squirms trying to pronounce Zerubbabel, Shealtiel, Jehozadak, perhaps even stumbling over the main biblical source for this lesson, Haggai. (Hag-eye? Hag-gee-i? Ha-gea?) Of course, your fun will be short-lived when your reader asks you who all these people were. Oops!

These characters are not exactly the biblical household names that we learned from our children's Sunday School Bibles. In fact, I did a quick check of the Durham area phone directory, and I did not spot anyone

who carries any of those names. Moses, yes. David, yes. Noah, yes. Rachel, yes. Sarah, Abraham, yes. But Jehozadak? I don't think so.

Now for me this has a lot to do with The United Methodist General Conference just completed in Fort Worth. (Although I am writing this several weeks ahead of the conference, I don't think I shall have found many Shealtiel there either!) Here is how it fits. Some of the most important decisions made at General Conference, April 25-May 3, were no doubt proposed, argued for, and finally approved by people whom I did not know. Of course, there is a place for key and visible leadership, but in United Methodist circles, as in this week's study text, the really beneficial action is often thought up and driven home by unknown persons who are simply trying to be faithful.

Haggai is not exactly viewed as a major prophet, but he is the one who got clear God's word that the temple should be rebuilt (Haggai 1:3-4). Zerubbabel was not even a chief government official,

but simply the son of the governor, but it is he whose spirit was stirred to action in favor of the temple reconstruction (Haggai 1:14). Joshua was not the high priest, but was the son of the high priest (Haggai 1:12). These relative unknowns were the ones who led God's people to do the right thing and rebuild the temple.

Our low visibility is not a hiding place from the call of God. Our lack of position or prestige is not a shield from what God would have us do. If God can use the Zerubbabels of the world, do you think God can use you and me?

#### What Someone Else Has Said

In Bishop Robert Schnase's book *Five Faithful Practices of Fruitful Congregations* (Abingdon Press), the author claims "Risk-taking Mission and Service is one of the fundamental activities of church life that is so critical that failure to practice it in some form results in a deterioration of the church's vitality and ability to make disciples of Jesus Christ."

#### Prayer

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Again, Lord, call again..."

May 11, 2008

Text: Nehemiah 1:1-2:20  
"Rebuilding the Wall"

Does this sound familiar? My friends Ken and Laurie Birt in Knoxville recently remodeled their kitchen. It started innocently enough. They needed a new refrigerator and decided to get one with stainless steel doors. That made the counters look a little shabby, so they got the counters fitted for a granite finish.

That, of course, meant the hinges and handles on the cabinets needed a higher polish look, so they were replaced with stainless designs. Now, the microwave looked out of place, so...well, you get the picture: the floor was new hardwood; the new eating tables and chairs were purchased, the new sink matched perfectly...etc., etc.

In today's text, the people of Jerusalem reached the "etc., etc." stage. The major project (getting the temple back into order) was finished. (In our studies, it was just last week; in their history it was probably seventy-five years later.)

But one thing leads to another and Nehemiah notices that there is yet another project that needs work. The wall—a defensive wall—served as a kind of identifying boundary for Jerusalem. Most communities, even the

most open, have boundaries that set them apart from other communities. The wall was one way the people of Jerusalem stated their identity.

This day is a good day to talk about identity. In civic culture, it is Mother's Day. In liturgical parlance, it is Pentecost Sunday. Much of our personal identities are established maternally. Much of our Church identity is shaped by the gift of the Holy Spirit. The identity that the people of Jerusalem saw (led by Nehemiah) was an identity of the "common good: (Nehemiah 2:18).

Would the people of Jerusalem been any less the people of God had they stopped after building the temple? Would they have been less shaped by "the common good" if they had not rebuilt the wall?

It is hard to say, but much of any one's identity is shaped by the signs and symbols of that identity. (Think how N. C. State fans respond to wolves or East Carolina supporters react to pirates or how N. C. Central students get excited about eagles.)

The wall was an instrument of defense to be sure, but it was also an identifier for the people of the city. In some ways, it told part of the story of who they were. So, how is your congregation identified in the community? You know how it is. One thing leads to another. Any identifying walls...or missions...or open doors...or...

#### What Someone Else Has Said

Michael Slaughter, *Spiritual Entrepreneurs* (Abingdon): "The Son of God did not give his life for (an) institutional concept of church membership. It is far more costly to belong to the Body of Christ than to any other human organization."

#### Prayer

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "What's next, O God..."

May 18, 2008

Text: Nehemiah 4-6  
"Up Against the Wall"

One of my favorite verses in the Bible is Nehemiah 6:3: "...I am doing a great work and cannot come down..." It is the message Nehemiah sent to Sanballat and Geshem when they tried to get him to stop working on rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem. They were trying to trick Nehemiah into deserting the wall and they intended to do him harm (Nehemiah 6:2). He did not fall for it and in a few more days the wall was completed (Nehemiah 6:15).

See "Bible study," page 14

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# Supplies needed by UMCOR for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia

The UMCOR Sager Brown Depot, the supply warehouse of the United Methodist Committee on Relief in Baldwin, La., needs support to help it provide bedding, sewing and layette kits for the countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.



Last September, for example, UMCOR Georgia and a local partner, the Fund to Support Disabled IDP Children, jointly distributed school,

health and sewing kits to 300 displaced children, including 55 physically and mentally disabled children from Abkhazia. However, Sager Brown has received fewer kits over the last year, and stocks are low. The warehouse especially needs donations for 33,000 layette kits, 64,000 sewing kits and 1,000 bedding kits. The depot is accepting complete kits as well as items in bulk, along with financial gifts. Full details are available at <http://new.gbgn-umc.org/umcor/getconnected/supplies/>. Each Kit page contains lists of specific items needed, the estimated value of each kit, the cost for processing and shipping the kit, shipping instructions, and contact information.

## Standish is speaker for Order of Elders gathering

H. Graham Standish, author of numerous books and articles in spirituality, will be the keynote speaker for the Gathering of the NC Conference Order of Elders on Monday, April 14, 9 a.m. at Nashville UMC in Nashville.



H. Graham Standish

leader, spiritual director, and a consultant with the Alban Institute. He is an adjunct professor at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary Doctor of Ministry program and Certificate in Spiritual Formation Program, focusing in the areas of spirituality and congregational leadership. Standish holds a Ph.D. in formative spirituality from Duquesne University, a Master of Social Work from the University of Pittsburgh, and a Master of Divinity from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Questions can be directed to Mack McMillan, chair of the Order of Elders, at [smcmillan@nccumc.org](mailto:smcmillan@nccumc.org).

## UM Youth help raise over \$9 million in Souper Bowl of Caring

United Methodist youth teamed up on Super Bowl Sunday with young people across the US to raise more than \$9 million to fight hunger and poverty in their local communities through the 2008 Souper Bowl of Caring. Approximately 2,200 United Methodist congregations and about 25,000 United Methodist youth participated in this year's campaign, said

Caroline Stephens, director of church relations for the nonprofit Souper Bowl organization. United Methodist collections total approximately \$830,000 thus far. The Souper Bowl of Caring is designed to transform the weekend of the NFL football championship game into the nation's largest youth-led weekend of giving and serving.

## Quail Haven continued from page 3

of experience in the healthcare and retirement home industry and we are delighted to find a director who already lives in Pinehurst and knows the community. We are grateful for the services of Mr. Dice, who has been with us for ten years, and wish him well in his retirement." Kropp holds a Bachelor of Science degree in healthcare management from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, IL and a Master of Arts degree in health and human services administration from St.

Mary's University in Winona, MN. He is licensed by the state as a nursing home administrator, an assisted living administrator and a certified administrator preceptor. His military service includes serving as an active duty Navy Corpsman, at Camp Pendleton Marine Corp Base in San Diego, CA. In 2006, he retired from the N. C. Army National Guard as a medical services corps officer. Kropp and his wife, Linda, have four children.



Randy Kropp

## conference CALENDAR

### April

- 3 - 6 Caring for Creation, Lake Junaluska
- 4 - 6 Kaleidoscope; Don Lee Center
- 4 - 6 Southeastern Jurisdiction UMW Quadrennial Meeting; Hampton, VA
- 5 NC Conference Historical Society; 9:30am - noon; NC Conf. Commission on Archives & History; 1-3 pm; John Wesley UMC, Fayetteville
- 7 Work day at MERCI, 10am
- 10 Fayetteville District Pastors' Meeting, 10am - noon; Kipling UMC
- 12 UMW Exec. Committee Meeting; 9am; Rose Hill UMC; Rose Hill
- 14 Order Of Elders Meeting; Nashville UMC; Nashville
- 15 -16 Christian Educators Fellowship Retreat with Jo Elaine Harris; Bergland Center, Camp Rockfish
- 19 "Let the Children Come" - children's ministry leaders workshop; Salem UMC; Greenville, 9:45am-12:15 pm
- 23-May 2 General Conference, Fort Worth, TX
- 26 UMW Racial Justice Workshop; Chestnut Street UMC, Lumberton
- 27 Youth Rally Day; NC Wesleyan College; Rocky Mount, 3-6pm
- 28 Wilmington District Pastors' meeting, 10am -11am; lunch provided RSVP please

### May

- 6 New Retirees Luncheon; noon, St. Luke UMC; Goldsboro
- 8 CEF Book Review; 12:30 pm-3pm; United Methodist Building
- 14 Conference-Wide Older Adult Ministry Event, "Living Life to the Fullest," Garner UMC; 9am-3:30pm
- 15-23 Licensed Local Pastors Study School (Licensing School), N.C. Wesleyan College, Rocky Mount
- 16-17 Conference UMW Spiritual Enrichment Retreat, Hay St UMC; Fayetteville
- 19 Durham District Pastors' Meeting; Glendale Heights UMC, 8:30 - 9pm; following AC Briefing session
- 20 Order of Deacons meeting with the Bishop; location TBA
- 22 Order of Local Pastors meeting with the Bishop; location TBA
- 31 Conference on Hearing Accessibility; 10am - 30pm; Garner UMC

For more information on upcoming North Carolina Conference events, visit the conference web site at [www.nccumc.org](http://www.nccumc.org) and click on "Calendar" at the top of the page.



## Deaths

FULFORD, Elma Bundy, widow of the Rev. Nelson Fulford, died Feb. 16. Funeral services were held in Farmville on Feb. 19.

CREW, Alice Blanche Houser Crew, widow of Rev. John Rogers Crew, Jr., died Feb. 21. Funeral services were held on February 23 at Zoar UMC in Greer, SC.

MACLEAN, Kathleen McCormick, widow of the Rev. Robert MacLean, died March 7. The funeral service was held at First UMC, Henderson on March 9.

## CLASSIFIEDS

**FRONT STREET UMC**, Burlington, NC, is conducting a job search for the position of Associate Director of Music. Primary responsibilities include coordination of the weekly contemporary worship service and musical leadership of praise band and singers. This position requires an individual with an understanding and passion for contemporary worship and its musical format, vocal and keyboard skills, and the ability to teach. Minimum time involvement would be 15-20 hours per week; however, additional church music opportunities may be available to qualified persons. Interested persons should send resume to Associate Director of Music, Front Street UMC, PO Box 2597, Burlington, NC 27216 or email mrold@nccumc.org.

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# April adult Bible study *continued from page 12*

It is easy for us to get diverted from our main ministry. Many squabbles within church life are not about the central vision (making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world) but about peripheral matters.

The spirit of Nehemiah would call us to say: "I am too busy with the central task to be bothered by debates over divisive topics of secondary nature." When our time and energy are focused on "a great work," there is no time for the lesser.

These chapters this week reveal just how hard it is to be persistently faithful. Note the challenges to Nehemiah and the workers: They were mocked (Nehemiah 4:2). They were teased (4:2-3). They were threatened with a fight (4:8). They had to prepare for defense (4:23). They were put under financial pressure (5:3). They were subject to trickery (6:2). They were lied about (6:7). They were frightened (6:9). They were intimidated (6:13). They had reputations tarnished (6:13).

The forces that seek to divide God's people, the forces that seek to disrupt what God is doing—those forces try again and again in all sorts of ways to get God's people to lose focus.

But the Gospel work is a great work and we need to call out with Nehemiah, "I am doing a great work and cannot come down." It will need to be said not once, not twice, but over and over, until the Gospel is fully proclaimed, until, as it were, the wall is built.

I ask myself "What theological side trip or relatively unimportant diversion is keeping me from doing a great work?" Thank you, Nehemiah. You have helped me with an answer.

### What Someone Else Has Said

Steve Doughty (*To Walk in Integrity*,

Upper Room Books), has written: "Like monsoon rains or winter blizzards, crises often come not singly but in series. The honest confession 'I don't know if I can take any more' speaks this reality...To be in crisis is to be in a time of fundamental decision. It is to be at the point of forming a critical judgment."

### Prayer

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Lord God, help me stay focused on the central task of love and grace..."

## May 25, 2008

### Text: Nehemiah 8

#### "Call to Renew the Covenant"

Yesterday was the 270th anniversary of the evening in 1738 when John Wesley went "unwillingly" to a prayer meeting/Bible study at Aldersgate Street in London and found his heart "strangely warmed."

Wesley experienced what the people of Israel realized in the events of this week's lesson: being in the presence of God's revealed Word can change a life. Prayer and Bible study can do that to you.

In this text, Ezra reads to the people and then leads the leaders in a study of the words of the law (Nehemiah 8:13). They recognized that what the Scripture said applied to them (8:16). They did what the law of God commanded. It was a time of rich celebration, what is described as "very great rejoicing." (8:17). Prayer and Bible study can do that to you.

Notice the inclusiveness with which God's Word was received. So often in ancient Hebrew practice, the men represented the community; the women and children got their spiritual formation second hand. But not here. "Men and women and all who could hear with understanding" (8:2) assembled for exposure to God's self-revelation. God's covenant tore down some barriers that sometimes stood in the way of spiritual growth. Prayer and Bible study can do that to you.

For the gathered Israelites, it was not enough just to hear the words of the law. What do they mean? How do I apply them to my life?

So, a group of people—don't you love the names: Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethal, Hodiah,

Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah—went out among the folks and interpreted the Scripture: "They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading" (8:8).

Hearing the Word can make us hungry for deeper, richer, fresher understandings. Prayer and Bible study can do that to you.

So, coming together before the Word led the people of Israel to renew their commitment to obey God's covenantal call. So, listening to God's law led the people of Israel to struggle with the justice implications of God's covenantal call. So, being assembled as a community helped the people of Israel understand that no one was in this covenant alone; it is a community-building covenant. Prayer and Bible study can do that to you.

### What Someone Else Has Said

In *Three Simple Rules: A Wesleyan Way of Living* (Abingdon Press), Bishop Reuben Job has penned: "Living in the presence of and in harmony with the living God who is made known in Jesus Christ and companions us in the Holy Spirit is to live life from the inside out."

### Prayer

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Lord of heaven and earth, I gather before Your Word so I am in Your presence..."

## New people

*continued from page 3*

- Has an effective discipleship system,
- Is deeply involved in community outreach.

This effort, however, does not preclude the starting of smaller or larger new faith communities or mission centers.

The Path 1 Team is composed of leaders from the Council of Bishops; the Connectional Table; boards of Global Ministries, Communications, Higher Education and Ministry; the Network for Congregational Developers; the five racial ethnic national plans; and a network of church planters.

While current research shows that starting new churches is more effective in leading people to Christ, the denomination is also starting new initiatives to help renew existing congregations.

\* Jeanette Pinkston is director of Media Relations at the GBOD in Nashville, TN.

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# around the CONFERENCE

## Oleander offers ESL classes, medical exams

The Rev. Linda Taylor (left), pastor of Oleander United Methodist Church in the Wilmington District, gives a hug to Ernestia Parada who organized a dinner for the Oleander congregation. English as a Second Language students from Mexico and Columbia prepared the fiesta to thank the congregation for their ministry of providing ESL classes for Hispanic/Latinos.

Since 2005 the Oleander church, through a grant from The Duke Endowment, has provided ESL classes and a pre-K medical examination for Hispanic/Latino children about to enter school the first time. Medical doctors, nurses, and other clinicians staff the free clinic held before the school year begins.



Last year, Oleander received the Jack and Kay Crum Endowment for Prophetic Church Award for the church's outreach into the Hispanic/Latino community.

"Because of the ESL instruction, the Latino students have developed English skills that qualified them for jobs in residential construction and food service," said Taylor.

## 5 churches pack meals for Stop Hunger Now

Volunteers from five churches packaged 9,504 meals at Stop Hunger Now's Goldsboro Sharehouse, located in the MERCI Center, on March 8.

The meals will be sent to Afghanistan for distribution by military chaplains to villages around the base.

Churches participating were St. Luke UMC, Pine Forest UMC, Fremont UMC, Jefferson UMC, and Lucama UMC.



## Mount Carmel UMC honors Olga Davis

Olga Wooten Davis (in center of front row holding plaque) was recently recognized by Mount Carmel UMC in Pikeville (Goldsboro District) for over 40 years of faithful service in teaching and caring for the children of the church. The plaque was presented to Davis by her pastor, the Rev. David Hollowell, standing left. Also shown with Davis are members of her family.



## Duke Memorial celebrates Tom Hargitt

Duke Memorial United Methodist Church in Durham, celebrated the faithful service of one of its members, Tom Hargitt, who served for over 21 years as the church's head usher. On Sunday, Feb. 10, new usher badges that cover the liturgical colors were dedicated in Hargitt's honor. A framed proclamation to his service was presented to the church to hang in the history room. Shown in the photograph taken during the reception following the dedication is Hargitt, who is seated. Standing behind him are his sister and brother-in-law, Ann & Del Burns of New Castle, Delaware. Dale & Mary Stewart are greeting Hargitt.

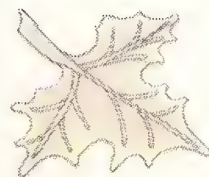
## Submitting Around the Conference Information

Items can be submitted to [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org). The deadline is the 5th day of the month. All articles and photos subject to editing. Photographs or art should be recorded in the largest size and highest resolution possible and sent in JPG or TIFF formats.

## Autumn Adventures An Event for Older Adults

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### Sapelo Island

Hop aboard a ferry to visit the Gullah community of Hog Hammock, which dates back to the early 1500's. Tour the R.J. Reynolds mansion and the restored lighthouse.

### Jekyll Island

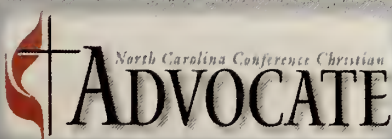
Explore the National Historic Landmark District via a tram tour, visit a restored millionaire's "cottage" of the gilded era and enjoy the beautiful Tiffany window in Faith Chapel.

### St. Simons Island

Visit historic sites including Fort Frederica, Lighthouse, Keeper's House and Museum and Christ Church. Hear a lecture by noted Wesley historian, Rev. Dave Hanson on the history of John and Charles Wesley on this island.



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# Workshop to inaugurate The Community Farm at Camp Chestnut Ridge coming May 16-18



Volunteers get hands-on with the process of tending God's creation while creating a new plant bed in the Camper Garden.

Chestnut Ridge Camp & Retreat Center will host an intensive weekend workshop to inaugurate The Community Farm at Chestnut Ridge, May 16-18.

In partnership with local rural churches, summer campers, and retreat participants, The Community Farm at Chestnut Ridge will be a working community farm supplying wholesome food for Chestnut Ridge, its visitors, and the local community in a manner that is sustainable over the long-term. It will also serve as a teaching model for visitors to Chestnut Ridge.

The Community Farm is specifically partnering with Efland, Chestnut Ridge, and Union Grove United Methodist Churches, as well as other local churches.

It is also in theological and practical partnership with Anathoth Community Garden, a ministry of Cedar Grove UMC, to operate the farm as a Church Sponsored Agriculture program.

The farm will provide a place for Christians to gather, learn, and participate in

renewing kingdom practices, such as creation care and table fellowship. The key areas of focus for The Community Farm are:

- A Church Sponsored Agriculture program in conjunction with local partner churches.
- Regular opportunities for practical theological education.
- Inclusion of The Community Farm into the after school, summer camping, and retreat programs of Chestnut Ridge.

The weekend workshop is open to all interested persons. The cost is \$40 per person, thanks to a grant from the Valparaiso Project. The fee includes two nights of lodging, all three meals on Saturday, and breakfast and lunch on Sunday. Persons from Efland, Union Grove, Chestnut Ridge, and Cedar Grove United Methodist Churches, the original partnering churches, may register for \$30 per person.

Registration information is available at: [www.campchestnutridge.org](http://www.campchestnutridge.org).



Jo Anna Riggins of Chestnut Ridge demonstrates the bounty of the garden to a local school group.

## May 17th "Dia de los Ninos" (Children's Day) is open to all

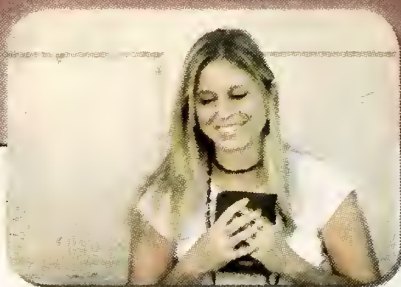
"Dia de los Ninos" (Children's Day) will be held at St. Francis United Methodist Church in Cary on May 17 from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. This will be a festival celebrating children, with many games and activities, food, face painting, live music, and other events. Bishop Gwinn will be present to say a special prayer of blessing over all the children. This conference event is open to all children and is not exclusive to Hispanic/Latinos.



(Photo by Kathy Gilbert, UMNS)



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# North Carolina Conference Christian ADVOCATE

Volume 153 / Number 5

May 2008

## General Conference Highlights

### General Conference acts on a wide range of issues

By J. Richard Peck \*

UMNS—The 2008 UM General Conference opened on April 23 with a Communion service celebrated at a wooden table fashioned from trees destroyed by Hurricane Katrina.

For the next 10 days, delegates heard stirring speeches and sermons offered from a pulpit made of the same hurricane-damaged trees—taken from the historic Gulfside Assembly retreat center in Waveland, Miss. (See pg. 16)

Both the pulpit and the Communion table served as reminders of physical and spiritual storms and the common faith that links members of the 11.5 million-member church.

Under the theme "A Future with Hope—Making Disciples for Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World," the conference began on the 40th anniversary to the day when the Evangelical United Brethren Church united with the Methodist Church to form The United Methodist Church.

The 2008 meeting ended on May 2

See "GC wrap-up," page 4

## A Future with Hope

Fort Worth, Texas  
2008 General Conference  
The United Methodist Church



NC Conference delegate Cashar Evans (standing right), who gives leadership to the Advance for Christ, was a major presenter for the 60th Anniversary Celebration of the Advance. (Photo by Bill Norton)



(L-R) NC Conference delegates, Steve Taylor and the Rev. Leonard Fairley, were assigned to the Church and Society committee at General Conference.



(L-R) The Rev. Mary Jane Pierce Norton and NC Conference delegate the Rev. Patricia Archer were participants in the opening Service of Communion. Archer served as a subcommittee chair for the Judicial Administration committee. (Photo by Bill Norton)



NC Conference delegates (L-R): the Rev. Belton Joyner, Gary Locklear, the Rev. Carol Goehring, and the Rev. Bob Bergland listen to a presentation. Joyner was elected to an eight-year term on the Judicial Council. Locklear was elected to a four-year term on the Commission of the General Conference. (Photo by Bill Norton)



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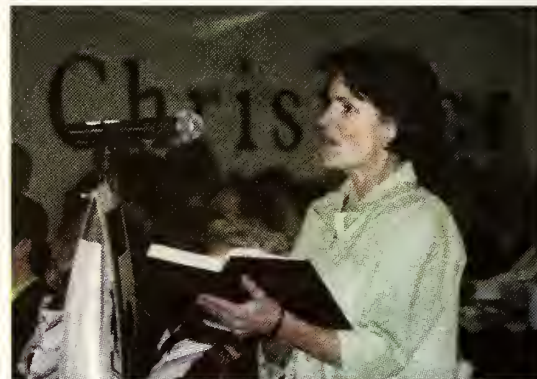




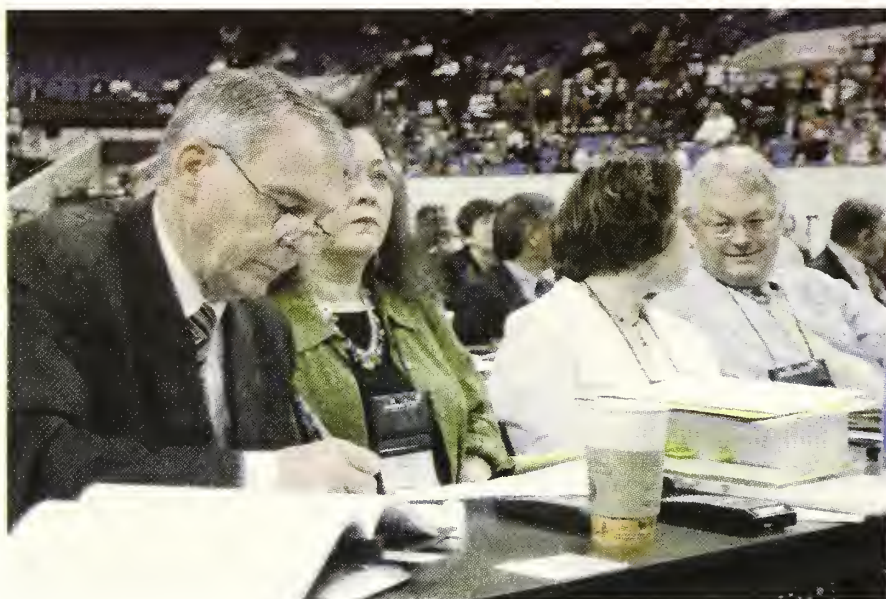
The NC Conference Delegation gathers on the assembly stage. Front two rows (L-R) Paul Leeland, Emily Farnell (reserve), Beth Norris (behind Emily Farnell), Irene Brownlee (reserve), Patricia Archer, Mack Parker, Bishop Al Gwinn, Bill Norton, Steve Taylor, Laura Little, Emily Innes, Carol Goehring, Beth Hood, Anna Gail Workman, Mack McMillan (reserve). Back rows (L-R) Ben Adams (behind Paul Leeland), Carl Frazier, Albert Shuler, Gray Southern, Bob Bergland, Duncan McMillan (reserve, behind Bob Bergland), Gary Locklear, Belton Joyner, Leonard Fairley, Cashar Evans.



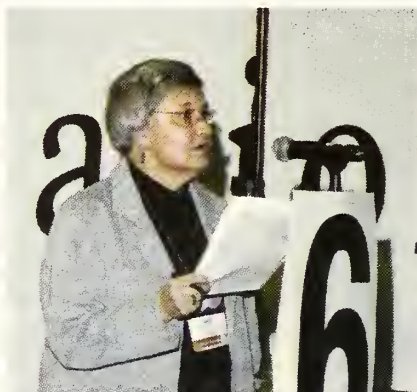
Bishop Al Gwinn speaks with members and friends of the delegation at a dinner. (Photo by Gary Locklear)



The Rev. Carol Goehring refers to *The Book of Discipline* while addressing the assembly. (Photo by Bill Norton)



(L-R) Shown on the assembly floor are NC Conference delegates: the Rev. Paul Leeland, delegation chair, Emily Innes, delegation vice chair and subcommittee chair for the Global Ministries committee, the Rev. Beth Hood, and Cashar Evans. The black rectangle-shaped devices on the tables are the wireless keypads used for voting.



The Rev. Gayle Felton, reserve delegate



Duncan McMillan, lay reserve delegate



(L-R) NC Conference delegates: Laura Little, the Rev. Gray Southern, Anna Gail Workman, the Rev. Albert Shuler, Mack Parker, the Rev. Carl Frazier, and Beth Norris. Frazier served as chair of the General Administration legislative committee. Shuler chaired a subcommittee of the Local Church committee. (Photo by Bill Norton)

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NC Conference episcopal nominee, Paul Leeland (center) and his wife Janet are greeted by a well-wisher. (Photo by Bill Norton)



# NC Conference delegates and bishop were active leaders in 2008 General Conference

By Bill Norton \*

Being elected to the Judicial Council, directing a committee or subcommittee, speaking on the conference floor, making a presentation to the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference, or leading a conference session, delegates from the North Carolina Conference and Bishop Al Gwinn provided leadership during the 2008 General Conference in Fort Worth, TX, April 23-May 2.

F. Belton Joyner, Jr., retired conference elder and interim Elizabeth City district superintendent, was elected one of nine members of the Judicial Council, the denomination's "supreme court."

The council rules on whether a specific church action was valid under the *Discipline* of The United Methodist Church.

Joyner was one of five new council members elected during the conference. Three were clergy and two were lay persons. He has been conference delegate to eight general conferences.

His election to an eight-year council term brings to an end his service as a delegate. Members of the council cannot serve as a delegate to general or jurisdictional conferences or serve on any general or jurisdictional conference board or agency.

The Rev. Kong S. NamKung will join the conference delegation for the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference.

Gary Locklear was elected to a four-year term on the Commission of the General Conference which makes decisions on the operations of the 2008 General Conference.

Carl Frazier was elected to serve as chair of the General Administration Legislative Committee. Included in the work of that committee were matters related to the constitution, local church Special Sundays, and the Connectional Table.

Subcommittees were needed in each of the 13 legislative committees to process petitions or resolutions before the conference. Emily Innes, global ministries; Patricia Archer, judicial administration; and Albert Shuler, local church, served as subcommittee chairs.

Cashar Evans, who gives leadership to the Advance for Christ, was a major presenter for the 60th Anniversary Celebration of the Advance, held on Tuesday morning, April 29. All members of the delegation gave a financial contribution to the Advance.

Conference delegate Patricia Archer, a deacon, was excited that a petition she wrote for the Order of Deacons was adopted. It requires consultation with a Staff-Parish Relations Committee, the district superintendent, and bishop prior to terminating employment with a deacon appointed to the local church.

The first delegate to speak on the conference floor was Duncan McMillan, the first reserve lay delegate who was sitting with the delegation that evening. While the rules were being adopted, he received permission from the presiding bishop to go to a microphone for an inquiry.

When McMillan asked if a specific rule had been skipped and not voted on, the presiding bishop turned to consult with two other bishops. "You

are correct. Thank you for bringing that to our attention," she said when facing the delegates.

In addition to McMillan, other delegates addressing the conference from the floor were: Carol Goehring, Bob Bergland, Gayle Felton.

Bishops sat in a group on the stage during the conference. The first evening when the conference was in session until 11 pm, only a few bishops remained.

Conference delegates could easily see Bishop Al Gwinn on the stage, surrounded by a number of empty seats. His presence and prayers were received as a sign of support to the NC Conference delegation.

When Bishop Gwinn presided during the May 1 afternoon session, the entire delegation sent a signed letter to him which said the delegation was praying for him. He acknowledged the letter and thanked the delegation at the end of the session.

As the delegation nominee for the episcopacy, Paul Leeland was one of six nominees speaking to delegates from conferences in the Southeastern Jurisdiction. One bishop will be elected

at the conference in July.

"We were very proud of Paul, he did an excellent job," said Bob Bergland, an NC Conference delegate. Leeland is the delegation chair.

In addition to Duncan McMillan, other reserve delegates sat for a session or more to provide a break for members of the General Conference delegation. These reserves included: laypersons Emily Farnell, Irene Brownlee, and Jimmy Shuler; and clergy Sam Wynn and Won NamKoong.

In addition to NC Conference, jurisdictional delegates from the conference also provided leadership.

Edgar DeJesus served as a page and distributed approved materials to the desk of delegates and delivered messages to and from conference participants.

Serving as monitors or advocates were LaNella Smith, Laurie Hays Coffman, and Mabel Cummings, a former delegate. David Banks served as interim treasurer of the General Commission on Religion and Race.

\* Bill Norton is NCC Advocate editor and a General Conference delegate.



## The Judicial Council

Members of the 2008-2012 Judicial Council of The United Methodist Church pose for a photo following their presentation to the denomination's 2008 General Conference in Fort Worth, Texas. From left are: Ruben Reyes, Dennis Blackwell, Kathi Austin-Mahle, Belton Joyner, Susan Henry-Crowe, Jon Gray, Angela Brown, Beth Capen and Bill Lawrence. The Rev. Susan Henry-Crowe is the new president of the Judicial Council of The United Methodist Church. She is the first woman to lead the denomination's "supreme court." Henry-Crowe, a clergy member of the South Carolina Annual (regional) Conference, has been dean of Cannon Chapel and Religious Life at Emory University since 1991. Elected in 1992 to her first eight-year term on the Judicial Council, she was elected to a second term in 2004. Council members elected Joyner as secretary. (UMNS Photo by Neill Caldwell)



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# General Conference wrap-up continued from page 1

with a worship service led by Bishop Gregory Palmer, the new president of the church's Council of Bishops, declaring hope for the church through the power of the Holy Spirit.

## The worldwide church

The assembly reflected changing demographics, as membership has shrunk in the United States while growing in Africa and the Philippines and parts of Europe.

This gathering was less centered on issues confined to the US than at previous assemblies. That was partially because 278 of the 992 delegates came from outside of the US—100 more than attended the 2004 session. It also was the result of proposals from a task force studying the global church.

Delegates approved 23 constitutional amendments that would make it possible to change the church's U.S.-centric structure to a more uniform global structure.

The amendments must be ratified by a two-thirds vote of the aggregate total



Liberia President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf told the conference that her country and her church share a common commitment to eradicate poverty.

"We need the church now as never before," she said. "The moment has never been more opportune to collaborate with the government to improve health and education and give our people hope."

(UMNS Photo by Mike DuBose)

of annual conferences. A 20-member committee will bring recommendations to the 2012 assembly.

In separate action, The United Methodist Church in Côte d'Ivoire, the largest regional conference of the worldwide denomination with almost 700,000 members, received its full rights and responsibilities.

United Methodists in the West African country, with only two delegates in 2008, will receive significantly greater representation at future assemblies.

Delegates approved \$20 million for Africa University in Zimbabwe; \$10 million was already budgeted in apportioned funds, and \$10 million will be raised through World Service Special Gifts.

Delegates also approved \$2 million to help UM theological schools in Africa train additional pastors.

## Budget

The delegates approved a \$642 million denominational spending plan for the next four years built around four areas of focus for the immediate future.

It was the first time the church has developed a budget on an outcome-based model, and church leaders celebrated the collaborative process used to reach a consensus among general agencies and other interests. See page 11 for more on the budget.

## Presentations

A United Methodist head of state—Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf—delivered an address that was an assembly highlight.

"This is a special honor for me," she

said. "I am the first African leader and the first female president to address the General Conference of The United Methodist Church." Her message included that "Liberia is on the way back" after years of civil war.

Bishop Sharon Brown Christopher used an innovative format to deliver the Episcopal Address on behalf of the Council of Bishops. The message was filled with songs, multimedia and multisensory images about how people receive and give hope and are transformed by encounters with Christ.

She attributed some of the U.S. membership decline to "ruptures in our United Methodist relationships. Left or right, conservative or liberal, we treat our baptized brothers and sisters as if they are our enemies" and seek to destroy those who have a different viewpoint or perspective, she said.

Lyn Powell, lay leader of the North Georgia Conference, delivered the Laity Address. She challenged lay members to assume responsibility for reaching the unchurched and said it is unreasonable for clergy, with their myriad responsibilities, to spend large quantities of time engaging the unchurched.

The first-ever Young People's address was also presented. See page 7 for more.

## Global health initiatives

William H. Gates Sr., co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, thanked the denomination for being a partner in the Nothing But Nets campaign to eliminate malaria in Africa. More than \$20 million has been raised since the campaign began in 2006.

The United Methodist Church "ramped up" its commitment to fight malaria by agreeing to enter into a capital campaign to raise \$75 million to \$100 million for global health.

Agencies and boards of the church will join in an expanded global partnership with the United Nations Foundation and other organizations to combat the diseases of poverty: HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

The church recently learned it will receive a \$5 million grant from the United Nations Foundation with help from the Gates Foundation supporting development of the partnership.

The hope is that the partnership, led by the people of The United Methodist Church and organized by the U.N. Foundation, will raise \$200 million to fight malaria in Africa.

## Homosexuality

The assembly essentially upheld the status quo on sexuality issues.

In retaining its stance declaring homosexual practice "incompatible with Christian teaching," the assembly rejected a majority report from a legislative committee that recommended new language that faithful people disagree on the topic but that "all seek a faithful witness."

A 516-416 vote replaced the majority report with a minority report calling for retention of the incompatibility clause. A subsequent final vote of 501-417 made it official.

The assembly affirmed that all people are "individuals of sacred worth created in the image of God." Delegates also retained statements asking "families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends."

A demonstration protesting the vote was held a day later. See page 12.

Palmer expressed a "deep sense of gratitude" for both how the demonstration was handled and how delegates and bishops responded.

In other actions related to sexuality, the conference:

- Asked the United Methodist Board of Church and Society to develop educational resources and materials on the effects of homophobia and heterosexism, the discrimination or prejudice against lesbians or gay men by

See "GC wrap-up," page 5

## "Faithful in witness" added to liturgy used for membership

By Elliott Wright \*

UMNS—People who join United Methodist churches henceforth will promise to be faithful in "their witness" as well as in their "prayers, their presence, their gifts and their service."

The 2008 United Methodist General Conference voted to add the witness phrase to the liturgy the church uses when a person makes a profession of membership. The new phrase highlights the mission and evangelistic responsibility of church membership.

Witness was noted as an integral part of laity's role from earliest Methodism in members' participation in the church's life. As congregations repeat the vows along with new members, a pledge to "witness" will remind members to be witnesses in the community.

\* Elliott Wright is the public information officer for the Board of Global Ministries.



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# General Conference wrap-up continued from page 4

heterosexual people.

- Continued the policy of not funding groups that promote the acceptance of homosexuality, but noted that funds also should not go to groups that violate church principles against rejecting or condemning lesbians, gays and friends.
- Retained language defining marriage as a relationship between one man and one woman.
- Let stand language in the *Book of Discipline* regarding pastoral authority over church membership.

The church did not take action to remove transgender pastors from ministry, leaving the Rev. Drew Phoenix to lead his Baltimore congregation. Phoenix transitioned from female to male about two years ago.

## Legislative process

The assembly received 1,564 proposals, 540 fewer than the number processed by the 2004 session, but the body had one less day to work.

Former General Conference sessions lasted 12 days but took a day of rest at the midpoint on Sunday. This year, as a cost-saving measure, the assembly met 10 days, including Sunday as a work day. The loss of the day of rest took its toll on the conference, however, and delegates voted to reinstate that day for the next assembly in 2012.

Delegates created a 24-member standing committee on faith and order to help bishops and the church reflect on matters of faith, doctrinal teaching, order and discipline. The group also will provide study materials upon the request of the bishops, the Connectional Table or General Conference.

The conference called for a continuation of a study authorized by the 2004 assembly on the church's

ordering of ministry. The 28-member study group is to address the ordering of ministry, the separation of ordination and conference membership, and the streamlining of the ordained ministry candidacy process.

Delegates approved the creation of a hymnal revision committee and authorized it to bring a proposed hymnal to the 2012 General Conference.

An additional group will investigate the possibility of an Africana hymnal that incorporates music and liturgy from Africa—as well as Caribbean, African-American and other traditions with African roots.

## Constitutional amendments

General Conference passed a number of amendments to the church's constitution, which now await action from annual (regional) conferences.

All constitutional amendments approved by a two-thirds vote of General Conference must be ratified by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the aggregate number of voting annual members.

Delegates passed a constitutional amendment that reduces from two to one the number of years a person must be a professing member of a local church before he or she can be a member of an annual conference.

Annual conferences also will vote on proposals that provide for newly created conferences to be represented at general, jurisdictional or regional conferences on a non-proportional basis. The issue arose after the Côte d'Ivoire Conference was assigned two delegates for the 2008 General Conference.

One amendment would enable local pastors, associate members and provisional members to join ordained ministerial members in full connection in voting for delegates to General and jurisdictional conferences.

To vote, local pastors must have completed the Course of Study or master of divinity degree and have served under appointment for two consecutive years immediately preceding an election.

Only ordained members in full connection with an annual conference may be delegates.

If ratified, another amendment passed would require all local churches, Jurisdictional Conferences, General Conference, "groups, organizations, councils, committees, boards

and agencies" to adopt ethics and conflict-of-interest policies.

Another amendment would make it clear that all persons shall be eligible to attend UM worship services and, upon taking vows, become church members.

## Social action

Delegates urged US lawmakers to ensure immigration laws don't tear families apart, and they advocated for "full protection of all workers."

The 2008 delegates voted 416-384 for the Board of Church and Society and the Women's Division

of the Board of Global Ministries to continue as members in the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

The assembly added a statement on abortion to the Social Principles offering "ministries to reduce unintended pregnancies" and to assist the ministry of crisis pregnancy and support centers that help women "find feasible alternatives to abortion."

Stating that Israel continues to violate international law by building a wall on Palestinian land, the conference called upon Israelis and Palestinians to uphold U.N. resolutions and International Court of Justice rulings.

Delegates called on United Methodists to divest funds from companies that support the government of Sudan in order to end the genocide in that area.

The conference asked the Board of Church and Society to identify and publish on its Web site educational resources on stem-cell research and encouraged pastors to use the resources to become informed about the use of embryonic stem cells for medical research and to offer these resources for study in local churches.

## Other items

Delegates learned that church members raised \$3 million to restore churches damaged by Hurricane Katrina. More than \$60 million was given through the United Methodist Committee on Relief for humanitarian aid in the Gulf Coast.

The 40th anniversary of the founding of the denomination also marked the 40th anniversary of the dissolution of the Central Jurisdiction, a racially based structure, and the formation of the Commission on Religion and Race.

The assembly also celebrated the 60th anniversary of the Advance and the 100th anniversary of ministry to Methodist men, the Social Creed and the Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

The assembly increased the retirement age of bishops from 66 to 68 and increased the retirement age of other



NCC Bishop Alfred Wesley Gwinn, Jr. presided May 1 over the General Conference assembly. (UMNS Photo by Maile Bradfield)

ordained clergy from age 70 to 72.

Delegates approved a plan that will result in one less bishop in four of the five U.S. jurisdictions. This does not affect the Southeastern Jurisdiction.

Pastors or district superintendents may now ask the bishop to give sacramental authority to a deacon if an elder is not present. That right is confined to the location of a deacon's primary appointment.

In areas where it would take a great deal of time to deliver the sacraments to people, a layperson is given the right to deliver the Communion elements.

## Final session

The final gavel came down May 2 at 11:15 p.m., followed by worship, which ended shortly before midnight.

\* Richard Peck, a four-time editor of the *Daily Christian Advocate*, served as an editor for UM News Service during the 2008 General Conference—his 11th assembly.

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Bishop Mark Hanson (L) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and UM Bishop William Oden (R) share their joy during a morning worship service. General Conference approved a full communion agreement with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in which each church recognizes the other's ministry and mission, the authenticity of the other's baptism and Eucharist, and the interchangeability of ordained ministers. The ELCA assembly will act on the agreement in 2009. (UMNS Photo by John C. Goodwin)





## "Eyes Wide Open" exhibit

Laurie Hayes Coffman, pastor of Calvary UMC in Durham, examines boots and shoes in the Eyes Wide Open exhibit. The exhibit was created by the American Friends Service Committee in General Worth Park across from General Conference. The temporary display included a pair of combat boots for every service person from Texas who has died in Iraq and Afghanistan. About 200 pairs of civilian shoes were also on display, representing civilian casualties.

"These are sacred boots, which elevate this parcel to holy space," said Bishop John Schol of the Washington, D.C., Area. He said the Council of Bishops "believe war is incompatible with Christian teaching and the war in Iraq is an unjust war."

Bishop Charlene Kammerer of Virginia brought the cost of war to a personal level. "Every time my son leaves my porch, I do not know if I will see him again," she said. Her son, Christopher, is serving in the U.S. Navy on the USS LaBoon. "When your child comes home, it is a mixed blessing, because I know some will never come home," she said. Many soldiers have returned "maimed and with post-traumatic stress. We cannot begin to name the unspeakable loss to mothers in Iraq and Afghanistan."

Bishop Nkulu Ntamba Ntambo of the North Katanga Area of the Democratic Republic of Congo called for The United Methodist Church to "stand strong against the war. It's evil." He said that in his country, "everything has been destroyed" because of war. "We lost 4 million people," he said.

Schol urged the crowd gathered in the park, "Go and tell the story about these boots and the horrible things happening in Iraq. Pray for peace."

*Excerpted from a story by Deborah White, associate editor of Interpreter magazine.*

# Church supports justice for migrants

By Andrew J. Schleicher \*

UMNS—Through newly passed resolutions, the United Methodist Church is urging justice for migrants worldwide and reform of U.S. immigration laws.

## U.S. immigration

The U.S. domestic resolution calls for "full protection of all workers, which includes the opportunity to gain legal status for all migrants."

It also urges U.S. lawmakers to ensure that immigrant laws do not rip apart families.

"To refuse to welcome migrants to this country and to stand by in silence while families are separated, individual freedoms are ignored, and the migrant community in the US is demonized by members of Congress and the media, is complicity to sin," it states.

General Conference also added a new section on "Rights of Immigrants" to the denomination's Social Principles.

It states in part, "We affirm the right of all persons to equal opportunities for employment, access to housing, health care, education and freedom from social discrimination."

The global economic system has led to migration and many challenges for migrants.

The resolution, "Welcoming the Migrant to the United States," was written to incorporate six other resolutions that currently appear in the church's *Book of Resolutions*.

Amendments in legislative committee further incorporated proposed actions dealing with immigration.

A third resolution, proposed by Metodistas Asociados Representando la Causa de Hispano-Americanos (MARCHA), addressed both U.S. immigration reform and the church's responsibility to ensure fair treatment to immigrants.

"The broken immigration system in the United States and the xenophobic responses to migrants reflect the former social order," according to "Welcoming the Migrant to the United States."

It states: "The calling of the people of God is to advocate for the creation of a new immigration system that reflects Jesus' beloved community."

## Global migration

The "Global Migration and the Quest for Justice" resolution stresses the economic needs that contribute to massive movements of people today and the difficulties of migrants.

It states, "While money and products easily flow across borders,



A United Methodist woman waits for an immigrant rights rally to begin. (UMNS Photo by Paul Jeffrey)

the movement of people is increasingly restricted, leading to concentrations of the poor along borders and, often, to the building of literal and figurative walls of exclusion."

The resolution commits the church to help all types of migrants and to engage in advocacy on their behalf.

Responsibility for these resources lies with the Board of Global Ministries, the Board of Church and Society, and other church agencies.

The global resolution advocates for the unification of families divided by borders and commends refugee resettlement work of the United Methodist Committee on Relief.

A revision of the Social Principles replaces a statement on migrant workers with a more global perspective.

"We call upon governments and all workers to ensure for foreign workers the same economic, educational and social benefits enjoyed by other citizens," the new statement says.

## The right of immigration

Two additional resolutions call for the right of immigration and citizenship for children of U.S. citizens in Japan and the Philippines.

One of the resolutions specifies welcoming "the sons and daughters of Filipino World War II veterans who are or were naturalized citizens of the United States."

The resolutions were prepared through the United Methodist Task Force on Immigration, a unit composed of representatives from the various program agencies and ethnic caucuses of the denomination.

\*Andrew Schleicher is on the communications team for the Board of Global Ministries.

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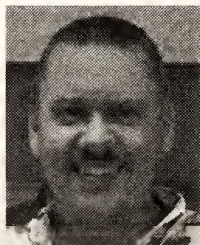
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By Kathy L. Gilbert \*

UMNS—Six young people came together and found one voice to present the first ever Young People's Address to an international delegation of United Methodists. They challenged the church to listen, be bold and believe the church's future is in good hands.

At times, delegates to the 2008 United Methodist General Conference cheered and clapped in response to the multimedia presentation, which included videos, photos, drumming and singing.

*Believe in us.  
Believe that  
the future of  
the church is in  
good hands.  
We're ready.  
The time is now.  
Let us begin."*

Andrew Craig, 16, of Denver; Matt Lockett, 20, of Seattle; and Jason Rathod, 24, of Hastings, Neb. They were chosen by the Division on Ministries with Young People, Board of Discipleship, to speak to the denomination's top legislative assembly.

Historically, the worldwide gathering has included only an Episcopal Address by a bishop and a Laity Address by a layperson.

The 2004 General Conference affirmed the value of the voices of youth and young adults by voting overwhelmingly to add a Young People's Address to the agenda for 2008.

The 2004 conference also approved creation of the Division on Ministries with Young People.

### Setting an example

Farnum said young people set an example for the church to practice holy conferencing during the 2007 Global Young People's Convocation and Legislative Assembly in South Africa. She said rather than focusing on personal agendas, the young people began listening to each other.

"It worked for the young people in Johannesburg," she said. "It can work for those of us gathered here in Fort Worth."

Delegates were challenged to resist "showboating and name calling." "On the local level, we've started believing that we're so far apart on the major issues of the day that we can only find common ground in hosting potlucks and singing praise songs," Rathod said.

"What I know about the church is that it yearns for young people," said Arnoldy. "What I know about young adults is that they yearn for a place to belong. This seems like a pretty fruitful situation."

### Safe space, vibrant possibility

"It takes courage to admit you are a Protestant Christian in the Orthodox society, where rituals and traditions can seem more important than personal relationships with God," said Volkova, a young adult pastor in Kirov, Russia.

"In Russian society, where many young people try to find happiness by drinking or drugs or smoking, The United Methodist Church offers a safe place where you can grow strong and find support and understanding."

Craig challenged delegates to be "God's seeds of hope." When Craig finished one segment of his speech, he sang "God will take care of you, through every day, o'er all the way. God will take care of you," to resounding clapping from the delegates.

Rathod said that when the church does its part to

ABOVE: United Methodist young people greet delegates to the 2008 United Methodist General Conference in Fort Worth, Texas, following the first-ever Young People's Address to the conference. From left are: Matt Lockett, Becca Farnum, Andrew Craig, Kira Volkova, Jason Rathod and the Rev. Annie Arnoldy. (UMNS Photo by Mike DuBose)

plant a seed, it can know "it will bear the Lord's fruit."

"Some say that this task is too great, that the church doesn't have the resources to make a big enough difference," he said. "But Scripture gives us a different message. It tells us to have strength and to 'be not afraid' because we can overcome any challenge."

### Believe in us

The young people's addresses were emotional and personal.

"We have shared stories of persecution, homelessness, and what it means to be a young person in a world desperately in need of Jesus," said Lockett.

"What you do with what you have heard is really up to you," Lockett said.

Faith for young people is about interaction, the six young people said.

The six concluded their presentation side by side on the stage and said, "Believe in us. Believe that the future of the church is in good hands. We're ready. The time is now. Let us begin."

Bishop Sharon Brown Christopher, who gave the Episcopal Address, said she was excited by the young people's address. "They are not just the church of tomorrow; they are leaders of today's church."

\* Kathy Gilbert is a news writer for UM News Service.

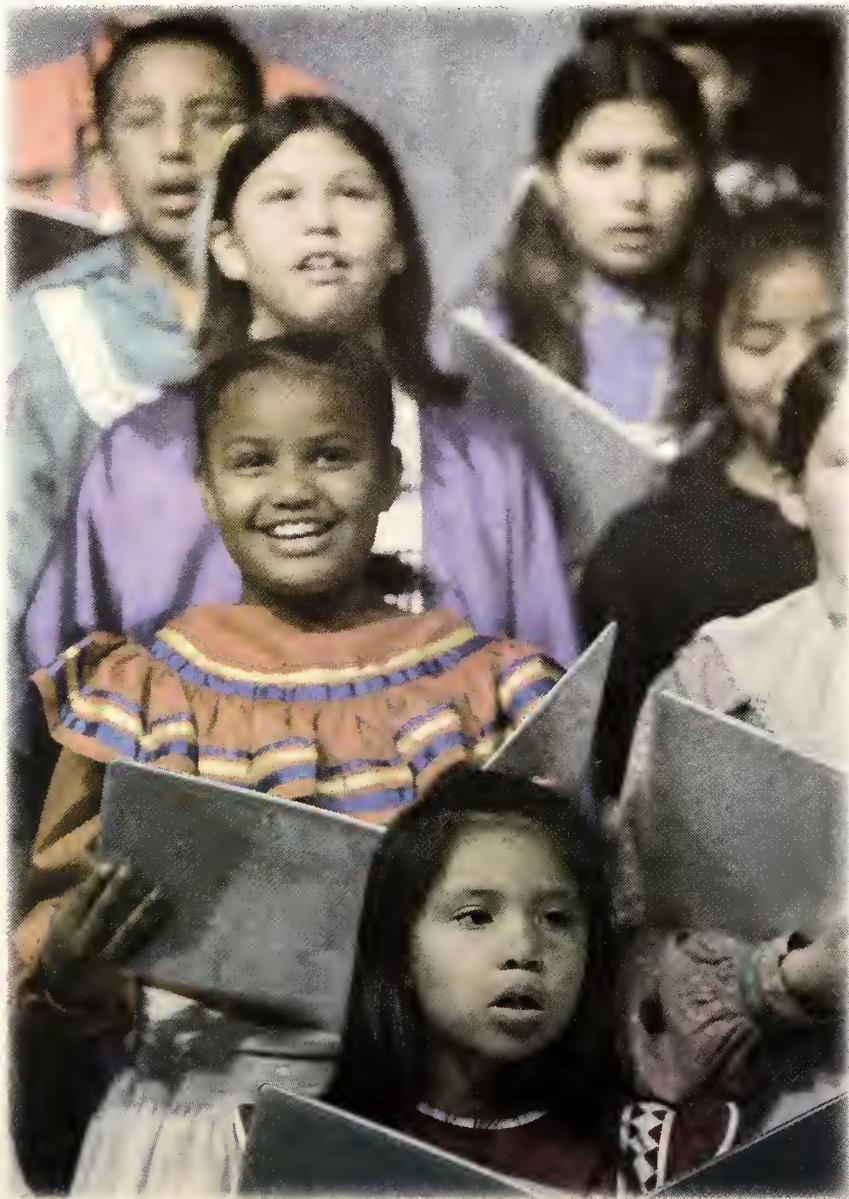




ABOVE: The Hope for Africa Children's Choir was organized by the United Methodist East Africa Annual Conference. Many members of the 23-member choir from Uganda are from displaced persons' camps and are orphans who have lost their families to civil war violence or AIDS. (UMNS Photo by Paul Jeffrey)

BELOW: The 36-member Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference Children's Choir sang during worship. Choir members ranged in age from 2 to 17 years and sang in Creek, Choctaw and English. They hail from many of the 89 churches and more than 35 tribes represented in the conference. Their songs and dress also represented a broad spectrum of the Native American nations in Oklahoma.

(UMNS Photo by Mike DuBose)



# The Worship

## *The physicality of spirituality*

By Yvette Moore \*

UMNS — “What we do in worship matters” — that was a guiding principle shaping the sights, sounds, feel and movement experienced in the physically engaging worship services of the 2008 United Methodist General Conference.

“Worship helps form us. The question is what are we being formed into?” said Marcia McFee, co-director of music and worship. “It’s not enough to sing the word. It’s not enough to talk the word. Something happens when we act.”

She believes getting physical in worship can help the church act like the body of Christ that it is. Worshippers at General Conference were clapping, singing, offering liturgies in American Sign Language, moving with songs of faith from around the world and turning en masse to face one another across the communion table in the center of the arena to enter what McFee calls “the physicality of spirituality.”

“Our physical bodies have something to do with our discipleship,” she said. “When we do something as simple as turning to the center to face each other around the communion table and see each other as the body of Christ across the table — especially in a place where there can be so many divisions — there’s no way we can then turn away from one another.”

### **Collaborative work**

From the start, the music and worship of the 2008 General Conference was the collaborative work of McFee and Mark Miller.

The two learned they’d both applied to direct music and worship at General Conference while crossing paths at Drew Theological School where McFee teaches and Miller is director of music and instructor of church music. Their joint response was, “Let’s have lunch,” recalled McFee.

“We talked because this is a huge job—together, we could do something special,” she said. “One of the wonderful things about the collaboration is I’ve gotten to focus on worship design, pulling together ritual and the dramatics, and writing liturgy.”

### **Proclaiming the Word through full-bodied worship**

McFee and Miller put out a call for artists of all kinds for General Conference worship. They reviewed each video, CD and script submission, considering how each artist’s offering could fit with the General Conference’s theme, “A Future with Hope.” For example, the Strangely Warmed Players’ “Crossing to the Other Side” comedy skit, featuring a captain who for safety reasons refused to undock his ship, challenged the church to risk being in mission on the day General Conference participants were called to remember their baptisms.

“I’m not a big fan of worship as a showcase,” McFee said. “Artists are there to proclaim the Word. In all of the services, we worked hard to integrate the theme and speak to the Word proclaimed.”

Dramatic, full-bodied worship is a hallmark of McFee’s work around the church. The author, preacher and worship designer has developed worship for church events, such as the quadrennial United Methodist Women’s Assembly, and regularly leads retreats and seminars on worship.

“I started out as a dancer—and dance is a part of my life that I love—but it’s not about watching people dance,” McFee said. “Worship is about asking people to enter into the physicality of spirituality. If worship never moves us to sync up with each other, we’re less likely to feel that we are the body of Christ.”

\*Yvette Moore is an executive secretary of communication for the Women’s Division, United Methodist Board of Global Ministries.

*“Worship is about asking people to enter into the physicality of spirituality. If worship never moves us to sync up with each other, we’re less likely to feel that we are the body of Christ.”*



# Experience



ABOVE: A new confirmand sprinkles water on participants during an April 26 service remembering baptismal vows.

(UMNS Photo by Paul Jeffrey)

RIGHT: Liturgical dancers perform during the April 23 opening worship of the 2008 General Conference.

(UMNS Photo by Maile Bradfield)

BELOW: Tongans from across The United Methodist Church give the invocation during the May 2 morning worship.

(UMNS Photo by John C. Goodwin)



ABOVE: The Chikara Taiko Drummers from Centenary United Methodist Church in Los Angeles participated in worship on April 28 at General Conference.

(UMNS Photo by Paul Jeffrey)



ABOVE: Foot washing was part of the May 1 morning worship service during the 2008 General Conference.

(UMNS Photo by Paul Jeffrey)

RIGHT: Members of the Christ United Methodist Church of the Deaf Choir from Baltimore, Maryland participated in worship. The church has been actively involved in sharing the love of Christ in the Deaf community for over 100 years.

(UMNS Photo by Mike DuBose)







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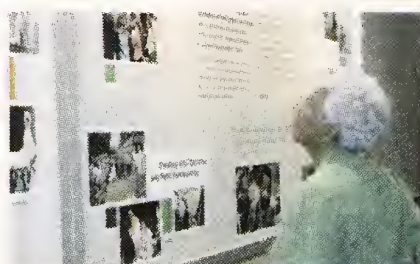
## Exhibit tells story of exclusion and inclusion

A walk through the Journey to Inclusiveness exhibit at the 2008 General Conference told the story of racial and gender exclusion and inclusion in the denomination.

The multimedia exhibit was designed to imitate going through a tunnel using more than 100 photographs, video and audio clips to narrate the story.

It began with stories of Methodism in the 1700s and concluded with present-day images that reflect how inclusiveness relates to the denomination's four focal areas of ministry.

Visitors to the exhibit saw images



Bishop Violet L. Fisher of the New York West Area views the Journey to Inclusiveness exhibit. (UMNS Photo by Maile Bradfield)

that show the struggle of women to find leadership in the denomination as early as the 1800s, when Anna Howard Shaw was the first female ordained in the Methodist Protestant Church and Jarena Lee was the first female preacher in the African Methodist Episcopal

See "Exhibit," page 13

## Church supports people of Tibet, Sudan, Taiwan

By Linda Bloom \*

UMNS — The delegates of General Conference approved resolutions supporting the people of Tibet, Sudan, and Taiwan.

United Methodists have officially affirmed support for "the people of Tibet and their struggle for independence and autonomy."

The Church affirms the Dalai Lama's 1987 Five Point Peace Plan and supports the efforts of the United Nations to protect human rights of all Tibetans and preserve their heritage.

Church agencies will "continue to monitor this situation and provide opportunities for church members to advocate for justice for the people of Tibet."

A new resolution on Sudan called "Sudan: A Call to Compassion and Caring" advocates for justice for all Sudanese, calls upon United Methodists

"in every country" to encourage their governments to aid development of a just economic system in the Sudan and asks church members to "examine all methods of protest and solidarity" to ensure that no actions cause violence.

A 2009 mission study on the Sudan being prepared by the Board of Global Ministries. Support is needed for the work of the UM Committee on Relief there.

Also approved was a petition reaffirming the denomination's support "of the democratic aspirations and achievements of the people of Taiwan."

Church members are encouraged to become educated about contemporary issues related to Taiwan and the "One China" policy and promote the rights of Taiwanese "for stability, security and self-determination of its own status in the family of nations."

\* Linda Bloom is a United Methodist News Service writer based in New York.

## Native American leaders honored for service

By Deborah White \*

UMNS — During General Conference, 50 Native American leaders and supporters from across the US attended a dinner sponsored by the Native American Comprehensive Plan.

Hymns sung in the languages of the Choctaw, Kiowa and Creek tribes set a spiritual tone for the celebration.

The Rev. Kenneth Locklear, pastor of Prospect UMC in Maxton, added some levity by singing songs with special lyrics he wrote for the occasion with help from the Rev. Larry Jent, a delegate from the Virginia Annual (regional) Conference.

The Revs. Homer Noley and Alvin Deer were honored at the celebration for their longtime commitment to Native American ministries in The United Methodist Church.

Both men were featured in the

"Journey to Inclusiveness" display at General Conference, sponsored by the Commission on Religion and Race.

"I've watched these two men at General Conferences," said the Rev. David Wilson, superintendent of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference, chair of the Native American Comprehensive Plan. "They have given a lot of their lives. We thank God for what He has been doing in and through them."

Both men spoke briefly at the celebration, emphasizing their pride in the progress of Native American ministries. "I have a passion for people who are hurting," Deer said. "I want my church to be that way. We can never be complacent about where we are in ministry because we can do more."

\* Deborah White is associate editor of Interpreter magazine.

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# Finance report emphasizes abundance over scarcity

By Marta W. Aldrich \*

UMNS—In a world that has embraced the “myth of scarcity” amidst a “culture of consumption,” God offers abundant life through Jesus Christ—a spiritual truth that the church must live and reflect in managing its finances.

Speaking on behalf of the finance agency of The United Methodist Church, Los Angeles Area Bishop Mary Ann Swenson delivered that message to General Conference.

“The idea that ‘more is better’ ... is an American idea that has spread around the globe, and it has become toxic,” said Swenson, president of the board for the General Council on

**“Our God is an abundant God, who has given every gift needed to fulfill our purpose.”**

## Church adopts proposed social creed as litany

By Kathy L. Gilbert \*

UMNS — A proposed new Social Creed for The United Methodist Church became a “companion litany” instead after action by the denomination’s lawmaking body.

A task force under the leadership of the Board of Church and Society worked on the “poetic” 2008 Social Creed that was proposed to the assembly.

## People in 48 countries view GC web site

UMNS—The number of people experiencing The United Methodist Church’s top legislative assembly goes far beyond a few thousand people in the heart of Texas.

People in at least 48 countries went online to watch the business sessions, worship services and special events of the conference. The proceedings were streamed live on the assembly’s Web site, [www.gc2008.umc.org](http://www.gc2008.umc.org). The broadcasts were being picked up in 26 different languages on five continents.

The General Conference Web site was viewed 487,890 times between April 23 and April 29, according to United Methodist Communications data. General Conference continued through May 2. The site had 53,033 viewings of the live streaming video as of the end of the day April 29.

Finance and Administration (GCFA).

“It is a turbulent, muddy river that has flooded and polluted our ability to see the abundance of what God has already given to us.”

With minimal discussion, the delegates approved the proposed budget by a vote of 750-28 and later approved the “apportionment formula” by which it is funded through money requested of the church’s 63 U.S. annual (regional) conferences and their local congregations.

Less than 2 percent of the money placed in local church offering plates goes to fund denominational ministries and administration.

For the first time in the church’s history, the budget was developed around four primary areas of emphasis: cultivating principled Christian leaders, starting new congregations and revitalizing existing ones, engaging in ministry with the poor, and stamping out the diseases of poverty.

Although it will not replace the Social Creed, the Rev. Neal Christie, staff on the board and a member of the task force, said it is “a gift to the church and reinforces and reframes the creed.”

“The proposed Social Creed is a beautiful, elegant expression about hope, and I will be excited to teach it as a litany,” he said.

The proposed creed went on a worldwide tour during 2007 and 2008 and reflected hours of careful crafting by United Methodists in the US, Norway, Africa and the Philippines.

The task force wanted to present a social creed that would be easier to use than the one adopted in 1972.

A musical version of the new creed was composed by Carol Simpson, a 23-year-old music graduate attending Claremont School of Theology.

The UM Social Creed has inspired other faith traditions and groups, including the National Council of Churches, to develop their own creeds, according to Bishop Beverly Shamana, president of the board.

“We take seriously the scriptural mandate to care for the sojourner, the weak, the orphaned,” said Jim Winkler, of the Board of Church and Society. “We believe God wants us to work for a better world that it may be on earth as it is in heaven.”

*The Book of Discipline* recommends the Social Creed be emphasized regularly in every congregation and used frequently in Sunday worship.

\* Kathy Gilbert is a writer for UMNS.

“Our God is an abundant God, who has given every gift needed to fulfill our purpose,” Swenson said. That abundance, she said, should be reflected in the ministry of the church.

Using the analogy of the church as a cup, Swenson said God’s life-giving love and grace should overflow and pour out into a thirsty world in need of spiritual transformation. However, “often we are living as if we have just one small cup.”

When used faithfully, however, the cup becomes Christ’s vessel for mission and ministry. “When it is empty, its purpose is to be filled; when it is filled, its purpose is to be emptied. It gives what it receives; it receives only so that it can pour out,” she said.

### Modest increase

The budget includes a 4.8 percent increase over the four-year period, which church leaders acknowledge does not keep up with inflation projections.

The United Methodist Church, funded primarily by its US congregations, has generally managed to maintain its financial strength despite decades of shrinking U.S. membership, thanks in part to a membership that on average is wealthier than the general population, according to numerous studies.

This was the first time the budget was prepared by GCFA in collaboration with the 4-year-old Connectional Table, including representatives from the Council of Bishops, churchwide agencies, U.S. jurisdictions, conferences outside of the United States, racial/ethnic caucuses and young adults.

“In 2004, this General Conference asked us to bring vision, mission and money together at the same table and

come back, and we have done it,” said Bishop John Hopkins, chairman of the Connectional Table, told the assembly.

The budget is based on a formula in which, for every \$1,000 that is received in a congregation, \$854 remains in the local church, \$124 supports district and annual conference ministries, and \$22 goes to denominational ministries.

### Worldwide connections

“(The budget) is our mission statement of what God is calling us as people of The United Methodist Church to be about in the world,” said Bishop Mary Ann Swenson.

She emphasized the importance of the connectional system in working together for God’s purpose. The 11.5 million-member denomination has 48,000 congregations served by more than 45,000 clergy in more than 50 countries on five continents.

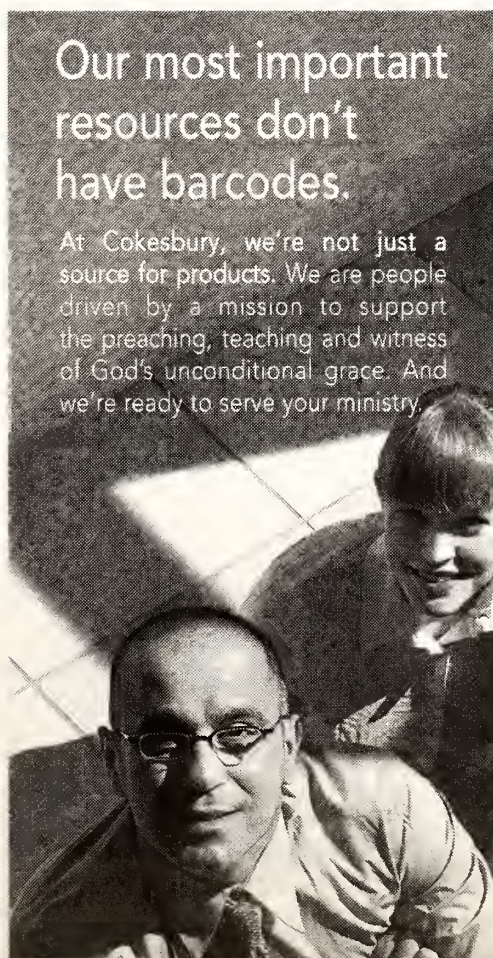
“In this past four years, our members have given nearly \$25 billion through the offering plate, of which almost \$520 million was provided for connectional ministries,” Swenson said.

In the next four years, “we expect to see as much as \$28 billion pass through our congregations in the US.”

Swenson said the church’s finance agency also is “...beginning to be able to measure the additional impact of the combined giving of our faithful members” outside the US, she said.

“God has poured out everything needed for ministry in this time, in this global place and for all the people of God. Let us be the cup overflowing in a thirsty world.”

\* Marta Aldrich is news editor of United Methodist News Service.



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# conference CALENDAR

June 2008

- June 1 Annual Conference  
Orientation Sessions:  
Fayetteville district;  
St Matthews UMC, 3-5pm  
Rocky Mount district;  
Sandy Cross UMC 3-5pm  
Sanford district;  
Jonesboro UMC 3-5pm  
Goldsboro district; St  
Paul UMC 7-9pm  
Raleigh district;  
St Marks UMC 7-9pm  
Rockingham district;  
St Luke UMC,  
Laurinburg, 7-9pm
- 11-14 Annual Conference  
Session; Greenville  
Convention Center,  
Greenville, NC
- 21-24 UMW South Atlantic  
Regional School;  
Kentucky Wesleyan  
College, Owensboro, KY
- 23-28 Summer Breakaway;  
Louisburg College
- 24 Pastor Moving Day

For more information  
on upcoming NC Conference events,  
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and click on "Calendar"  
at the top of the page.

## UMC mission statement revised

By Christie R. House \*

UMNS — To infuse a mission directive into the life and work of the church, the church's mission statement now reads, "The mission of the church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

The latter phrase was added in the revision and will now appear in *The United Methodist Book of Discipline*, the church's official law book.

The second and final sentence in the approved statement reads, "Local churches provide the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs."

Bishop Gregory Palmer, newly installed president of the Council of Bishops, explained that when the Council met in Fall 2004, they asked themselves, "To what end do we make disciples of Jesus Christ?" The bishops had an overall sense that the statement was incomplete.

They thought that disciples of Christ should work to transform the world into a new creation and began to use the phrase "for the transformation of the world" in relation to the mission of the church. "This is the missionary piece of our making disciples of Christ," noted Bishop Palmer. "We seek to join God in the redemption of the whole world."

\* Christie House is the editor of *New World Outlook*, a publication of the General Board of Global Ministries.



Some delegates to General Conference stood in protest of the vote on homosexuality, showing their stance for a more inclusive church. In a vote of 501-417 the assembly chose to retain the church's position that the practice of homosexuality is "incompatible with Christian teaching." (UMNS Photo by Paul Jeffrey)

## Act of witness declares "the body is broken"

In an act of witness in front of delegates to General Conference, more than 200 people declared that the denomination's policies and practices against homosexuality are "sinful" and that "sexuality is a gift from God."

Primarily dressed in black, demonstrators walked onto the legislative floor at the Fort Worth Convention Center, formed a two-lined cross around the communion table located in the center aisle and draped it in a black shroud to witness against the church's stance on homosexual practice. They entered silently, but once all demonstrators were in place, they sang, "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?"

The 15-minute demonstration was in reaction to the April 30 decision to retain the denomination's decades-old proscription in the Social Principles and other parts of the *Discipline* describing homosexual practice as "incompatible with Christian teaching."

Delegates voted 501-417 to keep the stance and also passed a resolution against homophobia and heterosexism, saying the church opposes "all forms of violence or discrimination based on gender, gender identity, sexual practice or sexual orientation."

The demonstration was a compromise between conference officers, the Council of Bishops and leaders of groups advocating the full inclusion of gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people in the church.

Plans had been made for a large-scale demonstration reminiscent of the 2000 conference in Cleveland, where people participated in acts of civil disobedience and were arrested. At the 2004 conference in Pittsburgh, a demonstration was held on the assembly floor.

Bishop Gregory Palmer, president of the Council of Bishops, read a statement to the conference: "It was our conviction

that being in holy conferencing means listening deeply and sensitively to voices you might otherwise not hear and identify ways in which the votes and the desire for a witness was affecting the life of the council," he said.

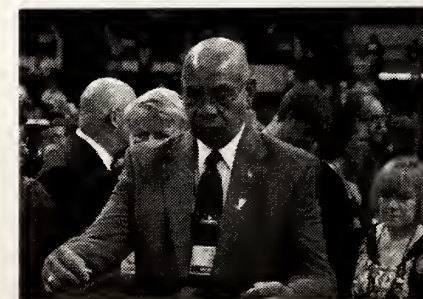
The "sensitive listening" that the bishops have been involved in led them to reaffirm their covenant to love, preach, serve, live by Wesley's three rules (do good, do no harm, and stay in love with God) and to lead all United Methodists, Palmer said.

During the witness, bishops who have different perspectives around the issue of sexual identity moved within, around and outside the demonstrators to live out their pastoral role among the body.

Twelve bishops, paralleling the 12 disciples, met with 12 of the demonstrators to maintain the covenant of holy conferencing and keep conversation going toward wholeness.

The bishops who met with the demonstrators were not of one mind but are of one heart in seeking the wholeness of the body of Christ and the denomination, Palmer said.

Excerpted from an article by UMNS news writer Linda Green.



During the time of witness, retired Bishop Melvin Talbert spoke of the church's 1939 action to segregate black Methodists into the Central Jurisdiction. "That action was wrong. That action was a sin against God. General Conference, General Conference, this is wrong. I invite you to reconsider." The segregated jurisdiction was dissolved in 1968.

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## BIRTHS

David and Sarah Stark (BU: Shiloh) announce the birth of their first child, a son, Elijah Indiana Stark, on April 19.

## DEATHS

WILSON, Jean, wife of Kelly Wilson, (GR: retired) and mother of the Jim Wilson (GR: St. James: Tarboro) died Mar. 31. Memorial services were held April 3 at St. James UMC, Tarboro.

COBLE, Mary Virginia, widow of Dr. Joseph Coble, died April 6 in Clinton. A graveside service was held in Greensboro on April 10.

MOORE, Robert (RO: retired), died April 15. A memorial service was held April 18 at Trinity UMC in Fairmont.



# Church can be key to fighting AIDS crisis

By Kathy L. Gilbert \*

UMNS — When it comes to solving the global AIDS/HIV crisis it is time to “pray and pay,” said the Rev. Donald Messer, author of *Breaking the Conspiracy of Silence—Christian Churches and the Global AIDS Crisis*.

Messer shared the sobering statistics of the virus during the UM Global

AIDS Fund Committee’s “Lighten the Burden II” event at First UMC, Fort Worth, prior to General Conference.

To date, the denomination has only raised \$2.5 million of an \$8 million commitment made in 2004 to help put a stop to the global AIDS crisis.

The \$8 million goal established by the 2004 General Conference represented a \$1 commitment from

every United Methodist in the US.

Messer, executive director of the Center for the Church and Global AIDS, reported as of 2008, 32 of 63 United Methodist annual (regional) conferences in the United States have not contributed anything to the fund.

Messer said raising funds has been hampered by fear, theological taboos and stigma surrounding the epidemic.

Kay Warren, an author and AIDS activist, told participants, “God has a plan, and God intends the church to be the answer” to the AIDS/HIV crisis.

“The church is the missing link and must take a seat at the table to solve the problem,” she said.

\* Kathy Gilbert is a UM News Service news writer based in Nashville, Tenn.

## Exhibit tells the story *continued from page 10*

Church. The journey also captured the stories of Asians, Pacific Islanders, African Americans, Hispanics and Native Americans as they fought for years to find a place in the life and leadership of the denomination.

Visitors watched video clips of racial-ethnic and female members sharing their hopes and struggles.

They also listened to audio clips of sermons, reflections and significant events in the life of the denomination, such as the moment the 1968 General Conference voted on the merger.

“I see this as not just encouraging but empowering because we know we’ve made some progress,” said Edie Sunday of Saginaw, Texas as she pointed toward

the exhibit. “When we say (the General Conference theme) ‘a future with hope,’ this shows we have it.”

At the end of the exhibit, visitors were invited to enter one of two “human race machines.”

These computer morphing booths gave visitors a chance to see what their facial characteristics might look like if they were of a different race.

The exhibit creators hoped the race machines would help visitors “appreciate that there is very little that separates us biologically as people of different races and ethnicities, but there is much that unites us as followers of Jesus Christ and as the people called Methodist,” according to one of the exhibit panels.

## Interpreters assist delegates

A 140-member team of interpreters and technicians made it possible for nearly 300 international delegates to the General Conference to participate in worship, committee discussions and floor debates.

Interpreters were available for nine languages: American Sign Language, 3; French, 30; German, 6; Korean, 6; Mandarin Chinese, 4; Portuguese,

27; Russian, 10; Spanish, 10; and Swahili, 26.

They worked in two-person teams, allowing each a slight break after 30 consecutive minutes of translations. The breaks were only partial during committee work, as the “off” person then kept track of petition numbers and other resources.

Glossaries on the church’s specialized vocabulary and acronyms were produced to assist in the process.

Donald Reasoner (right) translated into English a sermon of Bishop João Somane Machado of Mozambique. Reasoner works for the church’s Board of Global Ministries. (UMNS Photo by Mike DuBose)



## CLASSIFIEDS

**PART TIME YOUTH DIRECTOR** wanted for United Methodist Church in Currituck County NC with average attendance of 80 worshippers. Responsible for recruitment of new youth to a growing program, leading weekly bible study, fellowship gatherings and mission events. Twenty hours per week on a flexible schedule. Weekend work required. Salary based on experience. Health insurance and retirement plan available. Resumes should be e-mailed to sharonchurchjob@hotmail.com. No phone calls please.

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**FRONT STREET UMC, Burlington, NC**, is conducting a job search for the position of Associate Director of Music. Primary responsibilities include coordination of the weekly contemporary worship service and musical leadership of praise band and singers. This position requires an individual with an understanding and passion for contemporary worship and its musical format, vocal and keyboard skills, and the ability to teach. Minimum time involvement would be 15-20 hours per week; however, additional church music opportunities may be available to qualified persons. Interested persons should send resume to Associate Director of Music, Front Street UMC, PO Box 2597, Burlington, NC 27216 or email mroid@nccumc.org.

## Echoes of Faith: The Psalms



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Come study the book of Psalms and learn from this noted Bible teacher who has served for 35 years as Professor of Religion at Hiwassee College. Dr. Laycock holds both Masters of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees from Emory University.

This event has been approved for 1.3 hours of continuing education credit for clergy.

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[www.epworthbythesea.org](http://www.epworthbythesea.org)

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By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

## June 1, 2008

**Text: Hebrews 1:1-4, 8-12**  
**"Jesus as God's Son"**

After a few months in some of the less familiar places in the Old Testament, the lesson series returns to the New Testament for the next few months. Sometimes, reading well-known Scripture is a more difficult spiritual discipline than reading passages we seldom see. The temptation is to think that because we recognize a common text we have exhausted its meaning. Gasp! Surely the Word of God is richer and deeper than even fifty years of reading could uncover!

The writer of Hebrews begins this letter by saying that God keeps on adding to the revelation until it is fulfilled in Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-2). And in 2008, God continues to reveal God's will to us until we grasp its perfect presence in Jesus Christ. If I am in the same place in my spiritual journey now as I was when I was in the fifth grade, then I have missed out on a lot that God wants to reveal to me. Changing my mind on matters of social and theological import might well be God's prodding me toward the full revelation in Jesus Christ.

In previous centuries, a seal was pressed into wax to give its exact impression and thus guaranteeing the authenticity of the message. Documents of all sorts, envelopes and letters, and legal papers would be marked in wax with the exact imprint of the original seal. The writer of Hebrews uses that same metaphor: "(Jesus is) the exact imprint of God's very being" (Hebrews 1:3). If you see Jesus, you see the fullness of God. Guaranteed authentic!

A good test for my moral decisions is: Am I measuring against a partial revelation from God (Hebrews 1:1) or am I measuring against Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:3). It is an important question because the God revealed in Jesus Christ loves righteousness and hates wickedness (Hebrews 1:9). I want to get it right!

### What Someone Else Has Said:

In *A Comprehensive Plan for Making Cross-racial/Cultural Appointments in The United Methodist Church* (GCORR) Chester Jones has written: "The Bible is very clear when it speaks of vision. We read 'Where there is no vision, the people perish' (Proverbs 29:18)...Our

challenge is to take the vision given to us by God and make that vision a reality in the appointment-making process. We must continue to work together as a people with a resurrection faith, trusting in the liberating power of forgiveness, proclaiming the good news of God's redemption."

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of glory, turn us toward Jesus Christ that we might see You fully. Shine Your light upon our path that we might see the footprints of our Lord as He walked in paths of service. Bring us beside Jesus that we might draw our tomorrows from the shape of His presence..."

## June 8, 2008

**Text: Hebrews 7:20-28**  
**"Christ as Intercessor"**

The baseball shattered the window of Mr. Brown's den. Glass shards were left where once there had been a clear view of the side yard. Wind quickly began to flow into the house through the open pane. The boys playing ball next to Mr. Brown's house were scared to go and retrieve the baseball. They knew they had been careless and had broken the window. Finally, they chose Ken to go and knock on the door. Ken was known as "a good kid" who got along well with adults. So, slowly Ken made his way up the front steps. And rang the bell.

Ken was an intercessor for the boys who needed someone to speak up for them. Ken represented the whole group in seeking Mr. Brown's forgiveness and in gaining a new beginning.

The writer of Hebrews says that Jesus Christ is the intercessor who goes before God the Father in our behalf (Hebrews 7:25). When the writer says that "(Jesus) is able for all time to save..." (7:25), he chooses an interesting word to assert that Jesus is able: *dunamis*. It is a word that means power; it is a word that means ability; it is a word that means strong. (Do you recognize our word "dynamite"?). Let's try it like this: Jesus Christ is the dynamite that can blow away our sin and save us. He is able! And knocks on Mr. Brown's door in our behalf.

In the Wesleyan tradition, we speak often of perfection: full love of God and full love of neighbor. Jesus Christ is that perfection (Hebrews 7:28). We are called to have the mind in us that was in Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:5). That perfection, that mind of Christ, was lived out in full obedience and humility (Philippians 2:8). We are called to live toward that fullness, that

maturity, that completion. The word for perfection (*teleiosis*) means "fulfilling its purpose." The purpose of Christ has been to save (Hebrews 7:25). He has done that perfectly, completely, fully. Our perfection is not in order to save ourselves; that is already done in Christ; our perfection is to move from that justification into a life of sanctification, holy living. It is possible because Jesus Christ has agreed to go to the door and knock. When Jesus is our intercessor and knocks at the throne of grace, the answer is always "yes."

### What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Pulpit Resource* (Logos Productions), Bishop Will Willimon has written about Jesus' high priestly prayer: "Jesus is our glorious Savior. Yet Jesus has a very strange definition of glory. He is a crucified Savior who reigns from a cross...He calls us to share in his glory, promising us only that where he is, we shall be also."

Prayer: As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "O Christ, our Priest..."

## June 15, 2008

**Text: Hebrews 9:11-10:18**  
**"Christ as Redeemer"**

The writer of Hebrews draws on the Old Testament for much of the insight and imagery found in this New Testament book. The Bible I have in front of me now makes cross-references from one place in the Bible to another and it gives twenty such Old Testament passages that connect with this week's study text. For examples, Hebrews 10:16 is a direct quote of Jeremiah 31:33 and Hebrews 10:5 draws heavily on Psalm 40:6 and Isaiah 1:11. In light of this linking of Old Testament thought and New Testament revelation, it is not surprising to find that this week's look at the sacrificial blood of Jesus reflects ancient Hebrew practices of blood sacrifices. Blood is a symbol for life and the Jewish sacrificial offerings provided for blood (life) to be offered in exchange for forgiveness of sin. The contrast that the writer of Hebrews makes is that the old sacrifices had to be repeated while the sacrifice of Jesus was "once for all" (Hebrews 9:25-28).

Some years ago I attended a worship service in New Jersey, stopping (with some friends) at a church I had not attended before. We had driven around the area to find a service that began at 11:00 (unsure, I suppose, that God got up on Sunday morning much earlier than that!). The pastor—he was not United Methodist—preached on "blood in the Bible." He argued that

there was blood in every book of the Bible. He proceeded to work his way through the Scriptures, pausing in each of the sixty-six books long enough to find some reference to blood. In truth, I think he fudged quite a bit to make strange texts fit his intent. Although I disagree with his use (and abuse) of the biblical text, there is a sense in which he captured something of importance: the gift of Christ's sacrificial death is a filter through which we look at the full biblical message.

Our Wesleyan heritage claims that the atonement offered by Jesus is universal atonement, available to everyone. (Some traditions assert that God chooses those to whom the gift will be given.) Christ's sacrifice does not need to be repeated ("Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin"—Hebrews 10:18). That is one reason that some persons choose to call the central furniture in our sanctuaries "a table", not "an altar." An altar is where a sacrifice is made and no more sacrifice is needed!

### What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Prisoner of Tehran* (Free Press), Marina Nemat quotes Emily Bronte: "And if I pray, the only prayer that moves my lips for me is 'Leave the heart that now I beat, and give me liberty!'"

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Christ! Redeemer! Thank you for the gift of bountiful forgiveness, the life-giving blood..."

## June 22, 2008

**Text: Hebrews 12:1-13**  
**"Christ as Leader"**

God wants us to get it right, but there are no promises that the road to right will be easy. Note some of the images in this week's study text: "sin that clings so closely" (Hebrews 12:1), "run with perseverance" (12:1), "endured the cross" (12:2), "endured such hostility" (12:3), "struggle against sin" (12:4), "discipline of the Lord" (12:5), "chastises every child" (12:6), "endure trials" (12:7), "painful" (12:11), "drooping hands" (12:12), "weak knees" (12:13).

It is not likely that we shall use these terms in our evangelistic efforts. It is not likely that we shall include these ideas in our congregational mission statement. It is not likely that the sign in front of St. Swithens-by-the-Swamp United Methodist Church will advertise "We specialize in trials and hostility." Yet, here is the hard fact: following Jesus



# June adult Bible Study continued from page 14

"the peaceful fruit of righteousness" (12:11).

In English, the word "discipline" (12:5-11) has the same root as the word "disciple." (*The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* is how United Methodists seek to live out biblical discipleship.) The writer of Hebrews is clear: to be a disciple of Christ, to have Christ as leader, is to travel on some difficult stretches of roadway. But Christ is the guarantor that the journey is worth it. After all, God does want us to get it right.

## What Someone Else Has Said:

Michael Perry has written (*Truck: A Love Story*, Harper Perennial): "Church should not be easy. Church should be hard. I have read that in his last days, Jesus Christ fell on his face and sweated blood. The least you can do is sit on a hard pew and squirm some."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Lead on, O King Eternal..."

**June 29, 2008**

**Text: Hebrews 13:1-16**  
**"The Eternal Christ"**

Do you have a new pastor this Sunday? For many United Methodists, this is the first Sunday in new appointments for pastors who moved after annual conference. It is not a bad time to be reminded "to show hospitality to strangers" (Hebrews 13:2)! You can decide later if, in welcoming your new pastor, you were "entertaining angels without knowing it" (13:2)!

The change of clergy leadership can be a stressful time for a congregation. (Come to think of it: *not* changing clergy leadership can be a stressful time for some congregations!) In fact, most life changes add tension and anxiety to our years.

And change and moving and new starts and new relationships seem increasingly to be the mark of twenty-first century existence.

It used to be that folks pretty much remained in the communities in which they grew up. No more. It used to be that the grandchildren would be just around the corner. No more. It used to be that persons remained employed by the same company for an entire career.

No more. There is a lot of "no more" about 2008!

It is small wonder that this week's key verse stands as a reassurance in this midst of these shifting times: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

In the midst of "strange teachings" (13:9), Jesus Christ is the constant. In the midst of financial duress (13:5), Jesus Christ is the constant. In the midst of marriage fidelity (or not) (13:4), Jesus Christ is the constant. In the midst of our struggle to do good (13:16), Jesus Christ is the constant. In the midst of uneven and uncertain days (13:14), Jesus Christ is the constant.

When John Wesley commented on Hebrews 13:8 (*Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*), he wrote that Jesus Christ "and his gospel is the same from everlasting to everlasting." This truth can tempt us into thinking that "the way we've always done it" is the way

Christ is a demanding journey.

Have you ever set out to climb to the top of a mountain side? Visions of the beautiful vista at the top gets us started with energy and excitement. We pick our way along rocky paths and scrub oaks. We sometimes have to make our own route. A lazy snake slithers across a nearby rock. The sweat begins to pour and the breath begins to whimper. It's ain't easy! But just about the time we are ready to abandon the climb, we meet another traveler, one who is coming back from the top of the mountain. "It's gorgeous!" the walker proclaims. "It's well worth the climb!" he announces. And we start the slow ascent again, renewed in our intent to get to the top.

When Christ is our leader, we have someone who has been to the mountain top and tells us that the journey is worth it. When Christ is our leader, what is lame is healed (12:13). When Christ is our leader, we are invited to

Jesus wants it done. Not necessarily so! What is unchanging is Jesus' love and saving power. What does the unchanging love of Jesus say about atomic energy, global warming, human sexuality, tools for evangelism, traffic safety...well, you get the idea. The love of Jesus is unchanged but there is a lot of knowledge and world condition that were not a part of his world. The joy of our task today is to let the unchanging love of our Lord change our hearts, our attitudes, our actions, until we are in accord with his perfect will.

## What Someone Else Has Said:

Hans Kung (*The Church, Image*) wrote: "(Jesus') coming and his work are signs of the reign of God which has already begun; in him, future perfection is already present..."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Lord of constant love..."

## In Loving Memory The Rev. Ralph Epps

*The following is in part from a eulogy delivered for the Rev. Ralph Epps at his funeral on Jan. 6, 2008 by his son, Isaac.*

God's Head Table is a little more crowded this afternoon. That's because I believe Ralph Epps was a saint who walked on this earth.

You see, Ralph Epps was not a complicated man; although he could frustrate many a complicated opinion with his basic, faith-driven, scripture-fed focus.

His view was simple: You get up in the morning, you put on your shoes, and you go out and lean into the despair [sic] of need and find someone to help; ...then someone else; ...then visit a shut-in; ...then on to the hospital to pray with most folks there.

It was not complicated. He learned early on how politics could enter church-related intelligence and priorities, and he had none of that. He decided to use his ministry to get to people in need and figure out how to help them. PERIOD.

And I will tell you that he did not put it away with the umbrella in the corner when he came home.

His hours sharing phone prayer from the couch have been received with such heart-felt thanks over the



years and even up until the last few weeks of his life.

In WWII at the Battle of the Bulge, Lt. Epps pulled eight wounded men from the field while under fire. The last two were so badly wounded that he knew they wouldn't make it.

When he found they had bled to death, he committed his life to give blood. The Red Cross has him on record for giving 9 gallons; and I'm sure there was more.

To give blood for your neighbor truly reflects God's calling for compassion and caring and acting on behalf of others; and that was how Ralph Epps lived every waking moment of his life.

The thing that impressed me was how he went about his calling with

such humility.

In 2005, he was honored as Duke Divinity School's Distinguished Alumnus. That day, when he was presented the award, was a very difficult time for him. It made him uncomfortable to have to listen to people praise his accomplishments.

As a son, it may be easy to lose objectivity when praising a father; but my feelings have the support of hundreds of people he touched over the 60 years he was active in the ministry.

They all have the same reaction: He was a saint and a true Man of God.

My challenge is that now we all have to crank up our giving another notch.

We all have to do a little more for each other to make up for the void left by the passing of a truly giving and caring Servant of God; Rev. Ralph I. Epps—my father and my best friend.

Rest in Peace in the Arms of Heaven, you dear, sweet, caring, loving Man of God.

*A scholarship fund has been established in Rev. Epps' memory. Contributions can be sent to Edenton UMC, 225 Virginia Road, Edenton, NC 27932.*

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# One storm, many trees, one vision - Rebirth

By Woody Woodrick \*

Juanita Franklin remembers the sound of chapel chimes carried on ocean breezes echoing among the tall trees at Gulfside Assembly in Waveland, Miss.

It's a special memory of a special place, and she'll likely never hear it again. Gulfside, a historic United Methodist conference center whose entrance was across the street from the Gulf of Mexico, was literally wiped off the map in 2005 by Hurricane Katrina.

However, something of the spirit that moved through those trees was kept alive when the 2008 General Conference convened in Fort Worth.

The meeting's communion table, altar rail, baptismal font, lectern, and a table, were crafted from trees gleaned from the 64-acre Gulfside property, which served as a retreat center and meeting place for African Americans before the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

The center served as a beacon for African-Americans. It often was the only place in the Deep South where groups of African-Americans could gather for conferences and retreats.

When Katrina roared into Waveland, all that history was lost, including a new building open just a few weeks.

## NC connections

Clay Smith, executive director of the Hinton Rural Life Center in

Hayesville and member of the NC Conference, was asked by the Commission on the General Conference to lead a group of craftsmen who built the furniture.

"It felt like a natural thing to be doing," Smith said. "I had been to Gulfside on numerous occasions. I appreciated the long history Gulfside had and its ministry with African-American Methodists through the generations and the new things they were beginning to do. It all came to a stop because of Katrina."

He traveled to Gulfside last October to gather red cedar and red oak for the furniture. When the logs were cut into boards, Smith loaded them into a rented truck and hauled them to North Carolina.

Smith collaborated on the designs with John Freeman, who taught at Candler School of Theology.

"We also had some help from some people from a local church in Hayesville. We've had about six people all together working on it, including four current or former United Methodist pastors," Smith said.

"We've been meeting one or two days per week building these pieces. The baptismal font will incorporate a bowl made by a local potter. We showed him the size we needed and he turned the bowl for us."

The tabletop, 6 feet in diameter, is made of cedar and part of a tree's trunk serves as the base (see bottom photo below). The other items are made of red oak.

## Rebirth at Gulfside

Plans for rebuilding a ministry center and housing at Gulfside are advancing. After General Conference, the furniture was to be returned to Mississippi.

"When folks are sitting at General Conference, Gulfside will be present and the Mississippi Conference will be present," said Mollie Stewart, chair of the Gulfside board and local church coordinator at Hinton.

"People will be seeing that the materials are from the Gulf Coast. The remains of Katrina can be pieces of hope. The trees may not be living, but they will be there and serving generations to come."

\* Woody Woodrick is editor of the Mississippi Advocate, the newspaper of the United Methodist Church's Mississippi Annual Conference.



Bishop Hope Morgan Ward of the Mississippi Area preached during the May 2 morning worship at General Conference. Ward is standing with the altar, table, and baptismal font created using trees salvaged from the Hurricane Katrina-damaged Gulfside Assembly in Waveland, Miss. (UMNS Photo by John C. Goodwin)

## Katrina Report: Praying for restoration and healing

During a "Katrina Report," Bishop William Oden of Dallas thanked church members for the \$3 million raised so far for the Katrina Church Recovery Appeal, but he noted that "Katrina fatigue has set in."

He called for a recommitment to supporting recovery of the Gulf Coast.

Established by the Council of Bishops, the Katrina Church Recovery Appeal is helping to restore hurricane-damaged UM facilities; pay salaries for clergy while their congregations cannot do so; establish new congregations or consolidate existing ones; renew church-based community ministries such as day-care centers; and provide such worship necessities as Bibles and hymnals to churches in need.

More than 40 UM churches were destroyed or severely damaged by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005.

Through the United Methodist Committee on Relief, church members raised more than \$60 million for humanitarian aid to Katrina survivors, and that assistance is continuing.

Mississippi Area Bishop Hope Morgan Ward pointed out that 11,000 families in Mississippi had received help so far from the denomination.

The Mississippi Annual (regional) Conference still receives 300 calls a week for assistance from Katrina survivors. More than 7,000 families in the state continue to live in housing provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

From an article by Linda Bloom, a UMNS writer based in New York.

## Gifts of broken things

Bishop Hope Morgan Ward shared the story of how United Methodists affected by Hurricane Katrina in Mississippi and Louisiana were asked to bring shards of broken items to be part of a cross (pictured top left) or handed out to conference delegates.

A woman came to Heritage UMC in D'Iberville, Miss., with a bent spoon. She said she had held onto it for more than two years, not knowing why. "Since the storm I have kept this bent spoon," the woman

said. "For some reason, I have not been able to throw this spoon away. Until now. I'm ready to let it go; let it go to someone at the General Conference."

Ward left the gifts of "broken things" on the desks of delegates and asked them to pray with her to the God "who is the healer of hearts, restorer of communities and our strong hope."

"God is powerfully with us. Christ ascends. The Spirit comes. So, this day, let go. Wait. Watch. Receive."



Clay Smith stands at the lectern he helped build for General Conference.



During the opening worship, Bishop Janice Huie, president of the Council of Bishops, and others circled the communion table made from Gulfside trees. Part of a tree's trunk serves as the table's base. (UMNS Photo by Paul Jeffrey)





## Three districts support MERCİ Mission Center

Over 135 items were donated for the auction which raised \$53,137 to support the MERCİ Mission Center.

On April 12, more than 500 people from the Burlington, Durham and Raleigh Districts came together to help raise funds for the MERCİ Mission Center in Goldsboro.

The supper/auction was held at Aldersgate UMC in Durham.

"What a tremendous outpouring of love," said the Rev. Randy Maynard, event organizer and pastor of Saint Andrews UMC in Garner. "The laity and clergy of the three districts rallied around this cause and their support was overwhelming!"

This was the first event of its kind to assist in fundraising efforts for MERCİ.

MERCİ receives no ongoing funding from the NC Annual Conference, so the idea for this fundraiser was conceived. Through the overwhelming support of

those attending, \$53,137 was presented to MERCİ.

Bishop Al Gwinn gave words of welcome. Dr. Belton Joyner was the keynote speaker. He challenged those assembled, as the "sheep of God's fold," to constantly go about looking for ways to assist those in need. He highlighted the good work that MERCİ is doing and asked the audience to be generous in their giving toward MERCİ.

Debra Upchurch, a member at Saint Andrews, was in charge of the live auction. "We had nearly 135 items for auction, and that was due to the generosity of numerous individuals and various churches. I can't possibly thank enough those that provided the outstanding donations," said Upchurch.

See "MERCİ," page 11

## Trustees seek to sell Raleigh offices, build new conference headquarters east of Garner

By Bill Norton \*

The headquarters for United Methodists in eastern North Carolina will move to a new location near the intersection of I-40 and US 70 east of Garner if the NC Annual Conference approves a request to sell the conference offices at 1307 Glenwood Avenue in Raleigh.

The Conference Board of Trustees will ask for approval to sell the conference office building, the 3.58 acres of land where it is situated, and the adjoining 2.42 acres containing the Raleigh Towne Apartments. The apartments are under a ground lease that matures in 2014.

In 2002, the conference authorized the trustees to purchase 10.2 acres of land in the Greenfield Parkway area for a future conference headquarters.

The purchase included an additional 4-plus acres in natural areas that cannot be developed but could be used for walking trails.

Construction of a new building is contingent on selling the building and property at 1307 Glenwood Avenue.

Two unsolicited offers to purchase the Glenwood Avenue property and the Raleigh Towne Apartments have been received. One offer of \$7.5 million for



The 10.2 acres of property for the new conference headquarters are located within the Greenfield Business Park near the intersection of I-40 and US 70.

both properties has been accepted by the trustees, contingent upon annual conference approval and detailed property evaluation by the purchaser. The name of the purchaser has not been announced.

If approval is granted, "an initial closing on the Glenwood property would take place within 60 days," said Cashar Evans, trustee chairperson, during pre-conference district briefing sessions. A separate closing would be held on the townhomes property.

"Preliminary consideration of the current and future needs of the annual conference indicate that a building of up to 35,000 square feet will be required," Evans said.

"Initial cost estimates for a building of that size would be around \$5 to \$5.5 million, including moving and other incidental costs," he said.

The current Glenwood Avenue office building was occupied in 1962.

"Included in the negotiations to sell the property is the right to lease back the current building for two and a half years so conference offices can remain in the building while a new building is under construction," Evans said.

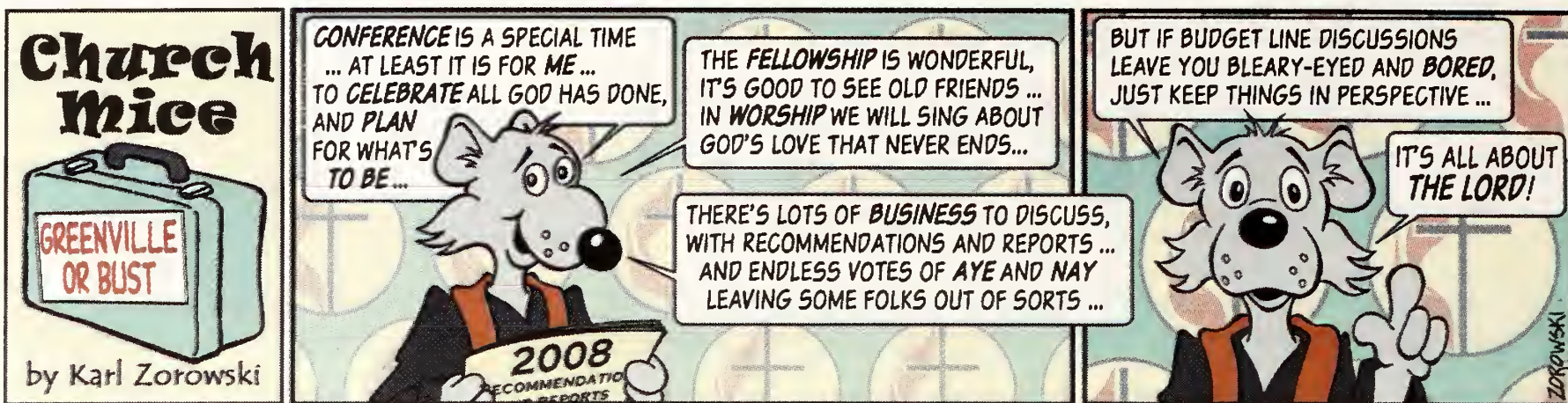
\* Bill Norton is conference director of communications and Advocate editor.



## "Dia de los Niños" – Children's Day Festival

Bishop Al Gwinn (kneeling in front) blessed each child individually during the "Dia de los Niños" (Children's Day) Festival held May 17 at Saint Francis UMC in Cary. The day of fun and fellowship was open to persons of all races and ethnicities. The event was sponsored by the NC Conference Hispanic/Latino and Multicultural Ministries Offices and Wake County Human Services.





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## United Methodists in eastern NC gather for Annual Conference

Lay and clergy members of the North Carolina Conference will meet in Annual Conference at the Greenville Convention Center June 11-14 to vote on business matters, worship, participate in Bible studies, and celebrate ministry in the conference and world.

Approximately 1,600 conference members from 56 counties in the eastern part of North Carolina are expected for the meeting. Conference rules designate that half the membership will be clergy and half of members will be lay persons.

Clergy and laity will begin in separate executive sessions at 10 am on Wednesday, June 11. The conference

plenary session starts at 1:30 pm with a Service of Holy Communion.

As part of the service, an offering will be taken for the Lake Junaluska Dam Restoration. Two other offerings, for the Advance for Christ and for Ministry of the Laity, will be taken during the conference.

Bishop Alfred Wesley Gwinn, Jr., bishop of the North Carolina Conference and the presiding officer of the Annual Conference, will deliver the State of the Church Address during the opening of conference.

Following the Service of Holy Communion, the conference will be organized and rules will be adopted.

One of the proposed rules, effective in August, would change the way General and Jurisdictional Conference Delegations determine their nominee for the episcopacy.

The delegation practice has been for the first clergy elected a delegate to General Conference to be the nominee. If the proposed change is adopted, the first elected would be one nominee and other nominees would come from delegation nominations.

Following presentations by each nominee, the one receiving 60 percent of the votes would be the delegation nominee. If no nominee receives 60

percent of the votes, there would be no delegation nominee.

If there is a delegation nominee, that nominee would be presented to the Annual Conference prior to Jurisdictional Conference for endorsement. If the nominee is endorsed by 60 percent of the conference members, that individual would become the conference nominee.

This rule change will not apply to the current delegation nominee, Dr. Paul Leeland, being presented at the 2008 Annual Conference.

See "Annual Conference," page 3

## A Heartfelt Thank You...

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Dr. H. William Green (L), associate pastor at First UMC was recently named "Pastor of the Year". During its annual gathering, the National Coalition of Men's Ministries also named the United Methodist Men as the "Men's Ministry of the Year." Receiving the award on behalf of the denomination was Larry Malone (R), director of Men's Ministry for the General Commission on United Methodist Men.

Dr. H. William Green, associate pastor of First UMC, Cary, was named "Pastor of the Year" by the National Coalition of Men's Ministries during their annual conference in April. Green was honored for his dedicated service to effective men's ministry.

The coalition is a partnership of over 75 men's organizations, both independent and denominationally affiliated.

The group's objective is to advance men's ministries, to assist in the discipleship of Christian men, and

to help spread the good news of Jesus Christ to all men.

During the conference, which was held in Nashville, Tenn., the United Methodist Church's United Methodist Men was chosen as the "Men's Ministry of the Year." UMM is celebrating its 100th year of ministry to the men of the church. Larry Malone, director of men's ministries on the staff of the General Commission on United Methodist Men, accepted the men's ministry of the year award on behalf of the denomination.



# Annual Conference continued from page 2

Leeland, who now serves as assistant to the bishop, will be presented to the conference for endorsement.

In addition to the election of the episcopal nominee, upon nominations from the floor, the election of a conference secretary and election of a conference statistician will be held. Each will serve for four years.

The Conference Council on Finance and Administration will nominate a treasurer/director of administrative services. The election is for four years.

At the 2007 conference, CCF&A nominated and the conference elected Christine Dodson to fill an unexpired term upon the resignation of the former treasurer who had accepted another position.

Dodson will be nominated at the 2008 conference for election as treasurer for a four-year term.

Upon nomination by the Board of Laity and the Cabinet, the conference will also elect a lay leader.

Emily Innes, conference lay leader, will be nominated for re-election for a four-year term.

The conference budget for consideration at the 2008 Annual Conference, is a 2.14 percent increase over the budget adopted in 2007.

Budgets are presented and adopted one year, the funds are raised the next year and spent the year after being raised. A final decision on the budget to be raised in 2009 for 2010 will be made

on Saturday.

A Service of Commissioning and Ordination will be held Wednesday evening.

Dr. Marcia McFee, a nationally recognized authority in worship design, will be providing guidance, advice, and leadership for worship during the conference.

McFee was a co-leader for worship at the 2008 General Conference of The United Methodist Church in Fort Worth, TX.

Dr. Ben Witherington, considered to be one of the top evangelical scholars in the world, will lead the Bible study on Thursday and Friday mornings.

Voted one of the 50 most influential Christians in America, Dr. Leonard Sweet will be the guest speaker for the Friday evening Lay Leadership Event.

Before Bishop Al Gwinn announces the appointments for pastors on Saturday, the conference will have:

- Taken action on four resolutions calling for: 1) humane mental health reform, support of anti-discrimination and anti-bullying, 2) holding US civilian political leaders responsible for the war in Iraq, expressing support and respect for US armed forces, and for withdrawing from the war in a timely and responsible manner.
- Decided to meet in Greenville or Fayetteville in 2009.



Dr. Leonard Sweet



Dr. Marcia McFee



Dr. Ben Witherington

- Voted on a recommendation from the Insurance Committee to keep health insurance premiums the same for the fourth year in a row, raise the life-time maximum from \$2 million to \$5 million, and increase mental health benefits.
- Celebrated the 60th Anniversary of the Advance for Christ.
- Heard a report about actions taken at the 2008 General Conference.
- Recognized those congregations identified as Acts 2 Churches.
- Taken action on a Board of Trustees recommendation to sell the conference headquarters in Raleigh and build a new headquarters in the Greenfield Park area, east of Garner (See article on page 1).
- Considered a recommendation to

modify the conference structure to form teams with a goal to provide additional leadership to local churches (See pages 8-9).

## From the EDITOR

Printing of the July issue of the *NCC Christian Advocate* will be delayed approximately one week in order to include news of the 2008 Annual Conference being held in Greenville from June 11-14. Each Annual Conference member will receive a copy. Since the mailing will be done from additional lists, some individuals could receive two copies of the July issue.

North Carolina Conference Christian  
**ADVOCATE**

## Clergy Health Initiative event explores the physical body as the "body of Christ"

By Chuck Cook \*

On April 29, the Clergy Health Initiative of the Rural Church Division of The Duke Endowment conducted a continuing education event focusing on pastoral wellness.

The day consisted of reflections on the leading causes of life; the connection of health and holiness; and contemplating how to physically embody the "body of Christ."

The event began as a joint continuing education event of the Durham and Goldsboro Districts, but was opened to other participants as well. Over 90 clergy attended the event at Horne Memorial UMC in Clayton.

Beginning with a worship service, the Rev. Jeremy Troxler, director of Duke's Thriving Rural Communities Program, preached about how denial and abuse of the physical body might be considered as a form of Gnosticism.

Dr. David Keck, who serves as the faculty consultant for the Clergy Health Initiative, introduced the idea that the

body is part of the body of Christ.

Later, the Rev. Edgardo Colon-Emeric lectured on John Wesley's notion of salvation as a holistic concept that connects health and holiness.

Program Director Robin Swift closed the meeting by offering a summary of the plans of the Clergy Health Initiatives, its objectives, and possibilities. She called for pastors to give her all the information they possibly can to help Duke to tailor this program to meet pastors' needs.

Swift welcomes feedback from other pastors as well. Contact her via email at [rswift@div.duke.edu](mailto:rswift@div.duke.edu).

The Clergy Health Initiative is a joint project of the NC Annual Conference, the Western NC Annual Conference, and The Duke Endowment, Rural Church Division.

To learn more, visit the web site <http://www.dukeendowment.org/news/-/i/17>.

\* The Rev. Chuck Cook is district superintendent of the Goldsboro District.

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# Basketball scores big win in anti-malaria campaign

By Kathy L. Gilbert \*

UMNS — The 992 General Conference delegates of the The United Methodist Church saved the lives of more than 50,000 children.

It began when Bishop Thomas Bickerton challenged the delegates to give up their lunch money on April 25, World Malaria Day, and donate \$10 to the Nothing But Nets anti-malaria campaign.

"Will we be so consumed by our business that we forget the children who die today from that killer disease? It seems altogether appropriate that we give every child in Africa an opportunity," he said.

"Ten dollars — it represents your lunch today, a lunch you could eat, or it represents a life that you can save. Buy a net. Save a life," Bickerton added.

That challenge netted \$15,000 and launched a bidding war for a basketball signed by UM bishops. The West Ohio Annual (regional) Conference made the slam-dunk bid of \$80,000 to score the basketball.

Other bidding conferences were encouraged to pay their bids as well, even if they were outbid.

The auction ended with an additional offering of \$429,270.

At \$10 a net, close to 50,000 families will be covered by insecticide-treated sleeping nets in Africa as a result of the donations.

"Who knew one basketball could save so many lives!" declared Elizabeth McKee Gore of the United Nations Foundation. With the U.N. Foundation, The United Methodist Church is a founding partner of Nothing But Nets, which fights malaria by purchasing and distributing

nets to Africa.

Nothing But Nets is part of the church's Global Health Initiative to fight diseases of poverty and promote congregational health and wholeness.

"I think we can and should learn some valuable lessons from the whole campaign. It is a spontaneous, grassroots response to a stated need to make the world a better place," said Bickerton.

## All the world

The winning offering was matched by William H. Gates Sr., co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, who had addressed the conference on May 1 and pledged to match the top bid.

During his address, Gates praised the church for its work to wipe out malaria.

"We are proud to be your partner in this campaign to end the world's worst killer of children. We believe the campaign cannot succeed without you," Gates said.

"Almost 300 years ago, your founder,

John Wesley, explained the moral implications of what is now fashionably called globalization," he said. "Wesley's statement 'I look on all the world as my parish,' describes our mutual responsibility."

"But more than anything, the fight against malaria is going to take a firm commitment to John Wesley's idea," he said. "You are 12 million people armed with the conviction that all the world is your parish. That makes you the most powerful weapon there is against malaria," said Gates.

## Part of a movement

"Dear friends, don't you love being part of a church that is becoming a global movement for the making of disciples for the transformation of the world?" asked Bishop Bruce R. Ough of West Ohio, as he took the pass from Bickerton and dribbled the autographed ball to the podium.

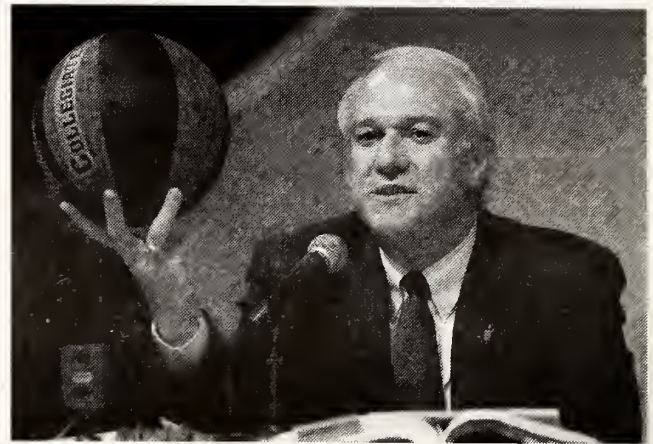
"I often get asked in West Ohio what does it mean to be part of a church that is a movement rather than institution," said Ough.

"My standard response is a movement is driven and empowered and guided by the Holy Spirit to reflect the justice and compassion we just sung about. And you have been a part of the movement at this General Conference. We did not vote to do this, did you notice that?" he asked.

## Global health

The United Methodist Church has "ramped up" its commitment to fight malaria by agreeing to enter into a capital campaign to raise \$75 million to \$100 million for global health.

"This is a milestone in the church's long history of caring for the poor and the whole person," said Bishop Janice Riggle Huie as General Conference approved the



Bishop Thomas Bickerton holds a basketball signed by bishops at General Conference. The basketball was auctioned to benefit the Nothing But Nets campaign against malaria, raising almost \$430,000. UMNS photo by Mike DuBose.



William H. Gates Sr. addressed delegates and visitors to the 2008 United Methodist General Conference. Gates, the father of Microsoft founder Bill Gates and a co-chairman of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, spoke on the need to eradicate malaria worldwide. UMNS photo by Mike DuBose.



Seven-year-old Katherine Commale and her mother, Lynda, joined Bishop John Hopkins during an on-stage presentation at General Conference. Katherine, whose family attends Hopewell UMC in Downingtown, Pa., created a diorama that demonstrated how a mosquito could not get through the bed net. To date, she has raised more than \$40,000 for the Nothing But Nets anti-malaria campaign, of which the people of The United Methodist Church are a founding partner. Katherine delighted Bishop Hopkins when she invited him to buy a net to help the campaign.

UMNS photo by Mike DuBose.

Global Health Initiative on May 1.

Agencies and boards of the church will join with the U.N. Foundation and other organizations to combat the diseases of poverty: HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

To help launch its capital campaign, the church will use a \$5 million grant from the U.N. Foundation with support from the Gates Foundation.

The action will mean a four-month planning phase for the Global Health Initiative involving the Board of Global Ministries, Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Board of Church and Society and UM Communications, said the Rev. Larry Hollon, top executive of United Methodist Communications.

Hollon said fighting malaria and other diseases of poverty requires a "seismic shift ... that we move toward each other in partnership. What I sense is that there is a great yearning. I believe we are at the dawn of a new day."

Bickerton said the church's involvement in addressing global health with secular partners is critical.

"Our unprecedented partnership with the secular world only continues to grow. But as it grows, we find out more and more that our partners are looking for the church to be the glue that will give purpose and meaning to this important endeavor to bring life to a dying world," said Bickerton.

"We all need to continue to pray and work for the fulfillment of the goal to make malaria a word we only use when we talk about history."

\* Kathy Gilbert is a UM News Service news writer based in Nashville, Tenn.



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Contact: [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org) or (919) 832-9560 with any questions.



# Caine named interim president for NC Wesleyan

Dr. Stanley P. Caine was recently named Interim President of NC Wesleyan College by the Board of Trustees.

Caine will assume his duties in July, following the departure of Dr. Ian Newbould, who announced last March that he will leave Wesleyan to become President of Richmond, The American International University in London.

Dr. Newbould has served as Wesleyan's President since the fall of 2001.

"Dr. Caine is prepared to serve as Interim President for up to a year and until a new President is appointed and assumes office," said Dr. William B. Pittman, chair of the trustees.

Caine comes to Wesleyan from Adrian College in Adrian, MI, where he served as President from 1987 through

2005 and was honored with President Emeritus status.

At Adrian he accomplished a major library expansion/addition and looks forward to the library addition currently in progress at Wesleyan.

Prior to that, he served as Vice President for Academic Affairs and Professor of History at Hanover College for 12 years.

He also has authored numerous articles and book reviews.

"Dr. Caine and his wife, Karen, are very excited about the opportunities and challenges presented by this appointment," Pittman said.

"They consider themselves a team, and both are enthusiastic....[They] are very energetic, intellectually curious, and dedicated to the advancement and well-being of young people. They have both been quite active in their present community."



Dr. Stanley Caine

"I am confident that Dr. Caine will serve the College well in this interim period," he said.

North Carolina Wesleyan's Board of Trustees is currently in the process of appointing a search committee of trustees, faculty, staff, alumni, and students that will first be tasked with selecting an academic search firm to work with the committee in finding candidates for the position of Wesleyan President.

"We find ourselves faced with challenging opportunities for new beginnings and new directions," Dr. Pittman said. "We want to take full advantage of this special time."



## NC Wesleyan library groundbreaking

A groundbreaking was held for the new 12,000-foot addition to North Carolina Wesleyan College's Elizabeth Braswell Pearsall Library, built in 1967 as one of the Wesleyan's first structures. The photo shows Wesleyan President Dr. Ian Newbould, members of Wesleyan's Board of Trustees, and others who gathered to turn over the first shovels of ground for the \$4 million expansion and renovation project. The project will nearly double the size of the existing library and will include a repositioned main entrance, an information/learning commons with computer stations, and a lab for instruction in the use of new technologies and multimedia. Expanded space for the college archives and collections of music, media, and microform will be constructed along with a new circulation area and expanded seating options. Construction is expected to be completed for the 2009 fall semester. Funding for the library addition and renovation came entirely from private sources.

### SEJ UMW hold quadrennial meeting, Innes re-elected

With a theme of "Called by Name," the Southeastern Jurisdiction - United Methodist Women held its quadrennial meeting in Hampton, VA.

There were 15 conferences and 1,209 United Methodist Women present. A total of 132 NC Conference women attended.

Emily Innes, vice president of the Women's Division of the UM General Board of Global Ministries, was re-elected as a director for the Women's Division for 2009-2012.

The new SEJ Leadership team was inducted including Annette Wright of the Raleigh district on the Committee of Nominations.

During the conference, an offering of \$10,368.39 was collected for mission giving.

Harriet Jane Olson, deputy general secretary of Women's Division, spoke on "Our Purpose."

Bishop Michael Watson of the South Georgia Conference delivered a message on the importance of names and how that name identifies the character of each person.

Bishop Charlene Kammerer of Virginia led a service of Holy Communion.

The event also included a procession led the Fife and Drum Corp of Yorktown.

All participants attended one of 12 focus groups on topics ranging from "Finance-Mission Money Means" to "Women's Division 101" to "Green Team" and "UMW Rocks (for teens and young women)."

Emily Innes

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## Upcoming events throughout the Conference

### Mission trip to Russia

A mission trip to Oryol, Russia (approximately 250 miles south of Moscow) is tentatively planned for July 17 – Aug. 1. For more information, please contact Donna Fowler-Marchant at (910) 488-8789 or Scott Marchant at (910) 489-9749 or e-mail them at [revdlf@aol.com](mailto:revdlf@aol.com) for details. Scott's blog has pictures and an idea of day to day activities available at <http://journals.aol.com/revdlf/russian-missions-in-orphanages/>.

### Youth summer event registration deadlines

Registration deadlines for two summer youth events for high school are approaching. The registration deadline for the Appalachian Trail Hike is June 6. The registration deadline for ACS (Annual Conference Session for Youth) is July 1. There are limited spaces for both these events so early registration (prior to the deadline) is advised. The registration form for these events is found in the 2008 Youth Events brochure which is available for download at [www.nccumc.org/youthministry](http://www.nccumc.org/youthministry). The Trail Hike takes place July 12-19, and ACS is July 21-26.

### Retreat focuses on sustainable agriculture as a faith practice

An upcoming Creation Care Retreat (July 25-27) will focus on sustainable agriculture as a practice of faith will be held at Chestnut Ridge Camp & Retreat Center. Retreat leaders for these hands-on experiences include Fred Bahnson from Anathoth Garden and Rich Church from Winfield Farm as well as year-round staff at Chestnut Ridge. Don Richter from the Valparaiso Project will preach. Local musicians will provide entertainment on Saturday evenings. The retreat is open to all interested persons. Registration details and more information are available at: [www.campchestnutridge.org](http://www.campchestnutridge.org).

### Hearing Accessibility Conference is postponed

The Hearing Accessibility Conference planned for May 31 at Garner UMC was postponed, possibly until the fall. Persons who have registered are asked to contact Linda Harris, [leeharris@nccumc.org](mailto:leeharris@nccumc.org), regarding a registration refund or registration for the next conference.

### Cyberspace, cyberministry and cybersafety

The Conference Safe Sanctuaries and Sexual Ethics Committees are offering workshops on cyberministry and cybersafety for pastors, church staff, age-level ministry leaders, local church webmasters, etc. The cost is \$5 per person, and registrations must be sent in at least 10 days prior to the event. A registration brochure and other information will be available online at [nccumc.org](http://nccumc.org).

Each workshop will be on a Saturday morning, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Sept. 6- Haymount UMC-Fayetteville; Sept. 20-White Plains UMC-Cary; Sept. 27-Wesley Memorial UMC-Wilmington; and Nov. 15- Edenton UMC-Edenton.

### Faithful eating for all people

Lives, finances, and communities are rarely setup to help people eat faithfully. Little is known about where the food is produced, how it is grown, how far it has traveled to reach the table. All of this affects God's people and God's creation. Time, money, knowledge, and local availability can keep people, at one point or another, from eating in a faithful way.

Join a discussion about food, health, faith, and community. What barriers keep people from eating fresh, healthy, local food? How can the barriers be overcome? Share stories and ideas and then gather around the table for a community meal on Saturday, June 14. The discussion will begin at 10am. The event is being hosted at Asbury Temple UMC in Durham.

This workshop will be the first of its kind offered by Come to the Table, a project of the Rural Life Committee of the North Carolina Council of Churches with support from the Duke Endowment.

Come to the Table offers information, workshops and technical assistance to congregations that are interested in connecting food and faith to relieve hunger and support local farms in North Carolina. For more information, see: [www.cometothetablenc.org](http://www.cometothetablenc.org).

The group hopes to lead similar discussions in interested congregations across the state. These discussions will help church communities understand their own needs and their own strengths as they discern their own ways to eat faithfully.

### School of Christian Mission

The UMW School of Christian Mission will be held July 23-26 at Methodist University in Fayetteville. Three courses are offered: Thursday - Israel and Palestine; Friday - Native Americans: Giving our Hearts Away; and Friday/Saturday - I Believe in Jesus. Participants can attend the school for any combination of courses/days. Membership in UMW is not required. Overnight accommodations are available in the Creekside Apartments on campus.

The Israel and Palestine study is a repeat from 2007. The study leaders are Sandra Croom, Shirley Way and Harriet Binkley. The study book is *Israel and Palestine* by Steve Goldstein with a study guide by Sandra Olewine.

The leaders for the Native American study are Dr. Ruth D. Woods, the Rev. Sylvia Collins-Ball and Steve Taylor. The course study book is *Giving Our Hearts Away: Native American Survival* by Thom White Wolf Fassett with a study guide by Brenda Connelly.

There are three opportunities to participate in the I Believe in Jesus study. Two split classes will begin Friday night from 6-9pm and finish Saturday morning from 8:15am-12 noon. The third class will be led by the Rev. Charlene Pierce Guider on Saturday. The study book is *I Believe in Jesus* by Bishop Minerva Carcaño with a study guide by Glory Dharmaraj.

All of the study books will be available for purchase at the UMW Spiritual Enrichment Retreat in May and on site at the School of Christian Mission. CEU credits are available. The registration form is available at <http://www.nccumc.org/docs/events/schl.pdf>. For questions, contact Theresa Hodges, dean of the School of Christian Mission, at [theresa.millsint@embarqmail.com](mailto:theresa.millsint@embarqmail.com).

### Let the Children Come...

A resource event for adults in leadership of local church children's ministry will be held Saturday, Aug. 23 at Page Memorial UMC in Aberdeen from 9:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Pre-registration is not required, and there is no cost for the event. Four workshops will be offered on curriculum, use of the One Room resource, missions, and families in partnership with the church for children's faith development.

More information about this workshop is available at [www.nccumc.org/childnmin/children05.htm](http://www.nccumc.org/childnmin/children05.htm).



# Young people add voices to church policy

By Kathy L. Gilbert \*

UMNS — Young people added their voices to the top legislative meeting of The United Methodist Church and served as role models for “holy conferencing” during the 2008 General Conference.

Although the church is graying—most members are age 60 and older—the young adult presence at General Conference was highly visible during the April 23-May 2 gathering.

The conference’s “Guidelines for Holy Conferencing — What God Expects of Us,” was inspired by the 2007 Global Young People’s Convocation and Legislative Assembly which met in South Africa.

The guidelines were adopted to provide a way for delegates to discuss important issues “without the acrimonious debate and parliamentary maneuvering” that can divide a group into contending factions.

In addition to the first-ever Young People’s Address, young people also submitted 43 proposals calling for resolutions on mostly social justice issues including war and peace, concern about poverty and opposition to killings in the Philippines.

The Division on Ministries with Young People of the UM Board of Discipleship sponsored the resolutions passed by young people at their global convocation.

Most proposed resolutions addressed social justice issues and called for increased representation of young people on church committees or agencies.

## ‘Humanity of all people’

An adopted resolution on political and social unrest declares: “We strongly oppose an exclusive religious ideology of any faith that fails to recognize the humanity of all people.” It calls the church to combat violence and war peaceably and to act against injustices.

A statement of concern about poverty asks local churches and agencies to study and understand the root causes of poverty, find ways to work with communities to alleviate poverty, advocate for just wages and “programs that promote caring and support for the poorest of the poor.”

During the Global Young People’s Convocation in South Africa, delegates worked with young people from the Philippines to draft legislation to support human-rights advocates under attack in Southeast Asia.

In part, the statement says: “Human rights are in danger in the Philippines. The image of God in every person is being assaulted in many ways, including God’s servants — bishops, pastors, deaconesses and women, men and youth lay leaders. These prophet servants of God have preached, with costly discipleship, the good news to the poor, deprived and marginalized peoples of the Philippines.”

The resolution also promises to pray and work with UM youth and young adult fellowships in the Philippines and look for ways to include young people on fact-finding missions to the country.

A “Young People’s Statement on War and Peace” will be added to the 2008 *Book of Resolutions* and calls for “the preservation of youth around the world.” The statement urges young people to work for peace in their communities, churches and world.

“We are the young people of The United Methodist Church,” the resolution concludes. “We affirm God’s clear call to be instruments of peace in all corners

**We are the young people of The United Methodist Church. We affirm God’s clear call to be instruments of peace in all corners of the world.**

of the world.”  
Another

approved resolution encourages local churches to designate a Darfur/Sudan Awareness Sunday and make resources available to assist Sunday school classes or Bible studies to discuss ways “to establish justice and end suffering” in the Sudan. In the past three years 400,000 men, women and children have been killed while 2.5 million have been forced to leave their homes.

## Youth ministry

General Conference took action requiring each of the church’s five U.S. jurisdictions to establish youth ministry organizations for the purpose of networking, supporting youth ministries in annual (regional)

See “Young People,” page 13



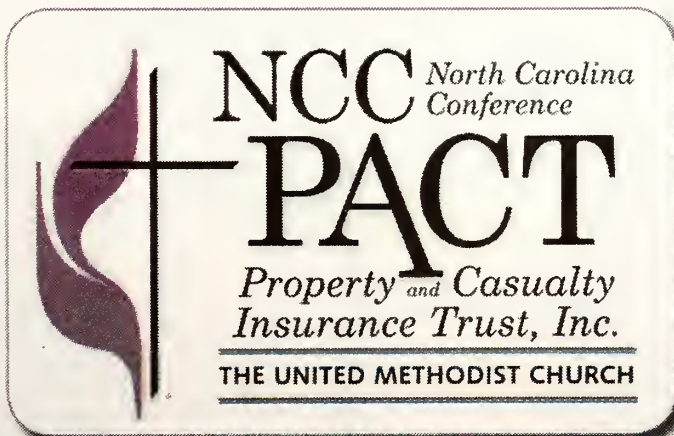
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# North Carolina Conference Vision Statement

**"Healthy Congregations  
and Effective Leaders  
in Every Place  
Making Disciples of Jesus Christ  
for the Transformation of the World."**

## Conference structure change proposed to simplify language, address new ministry needs

By Bill Norton \*

A modification of the conference structure from five circles of ministry to four teams of ministry will be proposed to the 2008 NC Annual Conference meeting June 11-14 in the Greenville Convention Center.

A task force, which has been studying the structure since last fall, said the adjustments were needed to help clarify language, better empower the local church, address the Council of Bishop's Seven Pathways of ministry, and to improve communication between conference groups and local congregations.

The current structure of five circles and the NC Conference Connectional Table (CCT) was adopted nine years ago before the Council of Bishops announced The Seven Pathways.

Included in the five circles are Resource Ministries, Mission Development, Spiritual Formation and Leadership Development, Episcopal, and Communications. Various conference groups relate to a circle and each circle relates to the CCT.

"What exactly does the Episcopal Circle do?" asked Emily Innes, conference lay leader and chair of the task force on Structure Review, in pointing out that task force members found that some language in the current structure was confusing.

"We moved from circles, a word that could convey silos or territory, to teams—teams of people moving out to empower the local church to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the

transformation of the world. Teams of people enhancing our connectedness," Innes said.

Under the proposed recommendation, the teams would be: Christian Formation, Leadership, Outreach Ministry, and Stewardship.

On a diagram of the proposal, Communications is shown circling the structure. A member of the

Conference Communications Committee will be on each team to support interpretation and communications within and outside each team.

Designated groups in each team will have a representative on the CCT, and three at-large members of the CCT will be on each team.

"The functions of the CCT are to state, cast forth, and implement the vision; interpret the mission; prioritize the budget; and hold the church accountable to the vision with measurable results," Innes said.

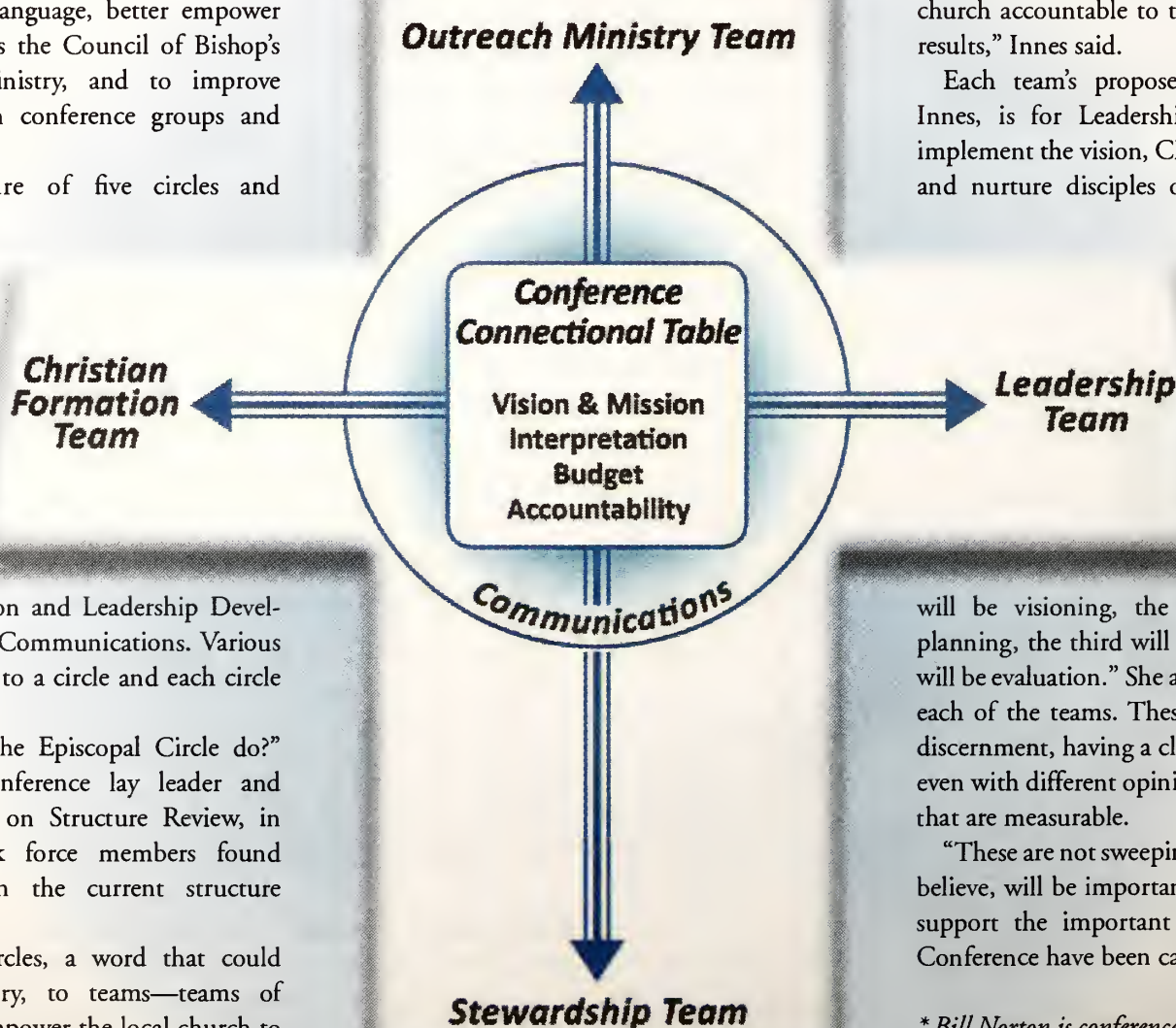
Each team's proposed purpose, according to Innes, is for Leadership to equip leaders who implement the vision, Christian Formation to form and nurture disciples of Jesus Christ, Outreach Ministry to carry forth ministry that transforms the world, and Stewardship to empower ministry.

"Each team will meet quarterly and each quarter will have a specific focus," Innes said.

"The first quarter will be visioning, the second will be strategic planning, the third will be budget, and the fourth will be evaluation." She also listed six core values for each of the teams. These values include prayerful discernment, having a clear purpose, building trust even with different opinions, and to have outcomes that are measurable.

"These are not sweeping changes but are ones, we believe, will be important in helping our structure support the important ministry we in the NC Conference have been called to do," Innes said.

\* Bill Norton is conference director of communications and Advocate Editor.





# 7

## The Seven Pathways

The Council of Bishops identified Seven Pathways to focus on while making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

1. Transforming existing congregations  
Revelation 1-3
2. Developing new congregations  
Acts 1:8  
Acts 16:9-10
3. Strengthening clergy and lay leadership  
Philippians 3: 13-14  
2nd Timothy 2:14
4. Teaching Wesleyan model of reaching and forming disciples of Jesus Christ  
Matthew 28: 19-20
5. Reaching and transforming the lives of new generations of children  
Matthew 19:14  
Acts 2:39  
Proverbs 22:6
6. Eliminating poverty in community with the poor  
Deuteronomy 15:7  
Luke 10
7. Expanding racial / ethnic ministries  
Acts 10:28

## Core Values of the NC Conference Teams

- ⦿ Prayerful discernment and worshipful work centered on Christ
- ⦿ Clarity of purpose in meetings
- ⦿ Covenant to be prepared, present, and to participate fully
- ⦿ Value diversity
- ⦿ Build trust to embrace differences of opinion and move toward consensus
- ⦿ Ongoing evaluation of measurable outcomes

## Focus for Quarterly Team Meetings

- ⦿ First Quarter: Visioning
- ⦿ Second Quarter: Strategic Planning
- ⦿ Third Quarter: Budget
- ⦿ Fourth Quarter: Evaluation

## NC Conference Connectional Table

- Functions to state, cast forth, and implement the vision
- Interprets the mission
- Prioritizes the budget
- Holds the church accountable to the vision with measurable results

## Proposed NCC Teams

### Outreach Ministry Team

The Outreach Ministry Team serves to carry forth the ministry that transforms the world.

- Missions \*
- MERCI / Disaster Response
  - Zimbabwe Orphans Endeavor
  - Society of St. Andrew
  - Stop Hunger Now
  - Project AGAPE
  - Peru Covenant
  - Golden Cross
  - Disabilities (Special Needs)
  - DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministries
  - Criminal Justice & Mercy
  - Yokefellows
  - Kairos Prison Ministry
  - Refugee & Immigration
- UM Women \*
- UM Men \*
- Board of Institutions \*
- Methodist Home for Children
  - Methodist Retirement Homes
  - Colleges/Universities
  - Camp and Retreat Ministries
  - Asbury Homes
  - UM Foundation
- Communications \*\*

### Christian Formation Team

The Christian Formation Team serves to form and nurture disciples of Jesus Christ.

- Evangelism \*
- Church & Society \*
- Congregational Development \*
- Education & Nurture \*
- Youth
  - Young Adults
  - Children
  - Older Adults
  - Higher Education & Campus Ministry
  - Media Center
  - Archives & History
- Spiritual Life \*
- Worship
- Communications \*\*

### Leadership Team

The Leadership Team serves to equip leaders who implement the vision.

- Multicultural & Racial Ministries \*
- Hispanic/Latino
  - African American
  - Native American
  - Asian
  - Monitoring and Accountability
- Nominations
- Board of Laity \*
- Board of Ordained Ministry \*
- Continuing Education
  - Bishop's Day Apart
  - Sexual Ethics
  - Clergy Care
- Clergy Counseling
- Administrative Review
- Investigation
- Christian Unity & Interreligious Concerns \*
- NC Council of Churches
- Ministerial Relations
- Conference Staff Relations \*
- Episcopacy
- Communications \*\*

### Stewardship Team

The Stewardship Team serves to empower ministry.

- Council on Finance and Administration \*
- Equitable Compensation
  - Itinerant Clergy Moving Expenses
- Stewardship \*
- Information Technology
- Pensions & Past Service Liability \*
- Insurance
- Trustees \*
- Episcopal Residence
- Annual Conference Program
- Conference Rules
- Communications \*
- Treasurer's Office
- Conference Secretary's Office
- Connectional Ministries Office
- Bishop's Office Support
- Communications \*\*

\* Indicates a seat on the Conference Connectional Table  
\*\* Communications will partner with each team.



# Support needed for UMCOR efforts worldwide



## China - Earthquake

A United Methodist-supported relief team has been assessing the needs of earthquake survivors in several Chinese villages and distributing emergency supplies. United Methodists are working with a longtime partner in China to provide relief to those affected by the massive earthquake in Sichuan Province. The estimate of those left homeless by the quake is a approximately 5 million people.

The UM Board of Global Ministries, UM Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and Church World Service are responding through the Amity Foundation, an voluntary Chinese Christian organization. Amity and UMCOR are both part of Action by Churches Together International. Amity has been able to distribute drinking water, oil, quilts, and plastic tarps for temporary shelters. The organization is also coordinating qualified social workers to help survivors cope with the emotional traumas and physical needs that a disaster of this magnitude creates.

Donations can be made to International Disaster Response, China Earthquake, UMCOR Advance #982450.

## Myanmar - Cyclone Nargis

As aid trickles in to cyclone survivors in Myanmar, United Methodists and other faith-based groups are cooperating on relief efforts. UMCOR is working with partners in the Action by Churches Together network, including Church World Service. Local partners have distributed water purification tablets, food and materials for shelter reconstruction, according to the Rev. Sam Dixon, UMCOR's top executive.

About 1.5 million people are thought to be at risk following the May 3 cyclone in the Southeast Asian nation, formerly known as Burma. The Myanmar government now puts the official death toll at over 34,000 but the United Nations believes that 62,000 to 100,000 may have died. Government restrictions in Myanmar have

hampered efforts by other nations and relief organizations to rush aid to the cyclone survivors. The military has ruled the country since 1962.

"The United Methodist Committee on Relief is persistently pursuing all avenues to provide relief in Myanmar," Dixon said. Gifts to UMCOR Advance #3019674, Myanmar Emergency, will help survivors of Cyclone Nargis.

## U.S. - Severe Storms

In an unusually active U.S. tornado and spring storm season, UMCOR is working with United Methodist annual (regional) conferences that are establishing recovery ministries. Tornadoes and severe storms that erupted on May 10 raced across parts of the Plains and the Southeast, battering towns and killing at least 27 people in Oklahoma, Missouri, Georgia and Alabama, according to news reports. Another storm system hit Arkansas, Mississippi and Virginia on May 1-2, injuring an estimated 200 people in Virginia and killing seven in Arkansas.

UMCOR is working with affected annual conferences to meet emergency needs, assess damage and help with the long-term recovery plans. Donations can be made to Domestic Disaster Response, UMCOR Advance #901670.

## Supporting UMCOR's work

Checks can be given through church offering plates or mailed directly to UMCOR, P.O. Box 9068, New York, N.Y. 10087-9068. Write the Advance number and name on the memo line of the check. Credit-card donations are accepted online at [www.givetomission.org](http://www.givetomission.org) or by phone at (800) 554-8583.

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\* The annuity rate and tax deductions are somewhat lower when two persons are covered by a charitable gift annuity. Annuity rates are set annually by the American Council on Gift Annuities.







The Rev. Denise Waters (left) washes the hands of the Rev. Jan Thornton-Irvine during a service held as part of the Order of the Deacons gathering. Photo by Bill Norton.

## Deacons gather for a time of discussion

Bishop Al Gwinn met with the Order of Deacons for a time of discussion on May 20 at Edenton Street UMC in Raleigh.

The Order gathers yearly for conversation, fellowship and continuing spiritual growth as deacons ordained to Word and Service.

During the time together, Bishop Gwinn led the group in a discussion of the recent General Conference legislation that specifically impacts the Order of Deacons as well as other legislation for the general church.

The Order celebrated the approval of legislation that was submitted by the conference deacons to the General Conference. This change in *The Book of Discipline* will give opportunity for deacons to have consultation with the bishop and their district superintendent prior to the termination of their appointment.

Bishop Gwinn also spoke to the new legislation that permits Deacons in Full Connection, for the sake of extending the mission and ministry of the church, to be granted local sacramental authority for the administration of the sacraments in the absence of an elder.

The Council of Bishops will be discussing further the implementation of this new legislation that will take effect in Jan. 2009.

During their time together, the Order elected the Rev. Denise Waters as the new chair. Waters had been nominated by the Board of Ordained Ministry. The Rev. Trish Archer is completing service as chair of the Order for the past two quadrenniums.

During closing worship, the Order participated in a hand-washing service symbolizing the servant-hood ministry of all Christians.

## MERCI Mission Center auction

MERCI serves the NC Annual Conference through disaster response, and it also is a support center for missions. Recent funding for MERCI has suffered, but the work continues.

When a disaster strikes, MERCI makes available things like Flood Buckets, Health Kits, School Kits, and Layette (Baby) Kits.

"In 2007, 3,604 volunteers came to MERCI to work, and that was valued at over \$300,000," noted the Rev. Jim Huskins, program director at MERCI.

"As volunteers come, they go back to tell the story of MERCI, and this has prompted an increase in giving to support the work. For this fact I give thanks and praise to God. However,

with that being said, we still are in need of the continual financial support of everyone in this annual conference," said Huskins.

MERCI does ongoing mission support work in countries such as Liberia, Afghanistan, Armenia, Haiti, Zimbabwe. Supplies housed at MERCI are regularly sent to these countries to help hurting individuals.

Paul Francis, a lay member of First UMC in Elon, summarized the event: "It was an outstanding evening. The food was extraordinary. Aldersgate

## Focus was on spiritual vibrancy, transformation at Elders' meeting

Approximately 250 elders gathered at Nashville UMC on Monday, April 14 for a day of fellowship, worship, and nurture.

The keynote address was divided into two sessions and was delivered by Dr. N. Graham Standish. The morning session was devoted to the topic, "Restoring Spiritual Vibrancy to Our Congregations." The focus of the afternoon presentation was on "Leading Churches into Transformation."

Standish is the author of *Becoming a Blessed Church* and *Humble Leadership*. His talks in the two plenary sessions focused on ideas from both books.

An earlier book, *Discovering the Narrow Path*, is a foundational work for what Standish practices as pastor of Calvary Presbyterian Church in Zelienople, PA.

Describing himself as a mystic, Standish also pointed to other Christian leaders throughout the church's history, such as C.S. Lewis, Mother Teresa, Evelyn Underhill, and Thomas Kelly.

Citing the example found in Ezekiel 37, Standish asserted that spirituality is the breath of faith, an integrating factor that binds together the body of faith (religion) and the bones of faith (theology).

Further, Standish claimed that spirituality is the most proven way for churches to avoid slipping into functionality, a state where congregations focus on maintaining the status quo by existing and functioning without



Dr. N. Graham Standish spoke on "Restoring Spiritual Vibrancy to Our Congregations" and "Leading Churches into Transformation."

passion for mission and ministry.

The elders in full connection who gathered for this event were blessed by the hospitality of the Rev. Wayne Hicks and the congregation of Nashville UMC.

Bishop Al Gwinn served as celebrant for the closing service of Holy Communion. Dr. Charles Michael Smith and the Rev. Jon Strother assisted in leading singing.

Finishing his seventh year as Chair of the Order of Elders, the Rev. Mack McMillan said continued gatherings should be a priority.

"We come together for fellowship and worship; this binds those in the Order closer together. The teaching components of the last three gatherings have focused on spiritual formation and servant leadership. Now, after having four very meaningful annual gatherings, I am excited about what the future holds for our Order," McMillan stated.

*continued from page 1*

was most hospitable. The auctioneer, John Howe, did a magnificent job, and everyone really seemed to enjoy themselves."

Monetary support of MERCI is appreciated. Donations can be sent to: MERCI, 676 Community Drive, Goldsboro, NC 27530.

Contact the staff (toll-free) by calling 1-888-440-9167. Online donations are available through MERCI's web site at: [www.merciumc.org](http://www.merciumc.org).

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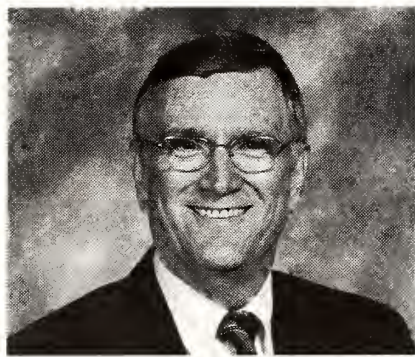
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By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

## July 6, 2008

**Text: Luke 4:31-37; 20:1-8**  
**"Christ as Teacher"**

While I was acting district superintendent in the Elizabeth City District, I was leading an introductory covenant meeting with a pastor-parish relations committee and their new pastor.

Suddenly, one of the members spoke up and said: "*Advocate! Christian Advocate!*" She looked at me in recognition as the one who wrote these Bible study articles.

Of course, I assumed she identified me because my brilliant, penetrating insights shown at the meeting resonated with the brilliant, penetrating insights shown in these writings.

Alas, not so. "I thought you looked familiar, sort of like that picture." Oh, well. So much for brilliant, penetrating insights.

In this week's lesson, Jesus is recognized as a teacher of significant things (Dare we say "brilliant, penetrating insights"?).

The New International Version renders Luke 4:32 "They were amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority." Lots of teachers came by, but the people saw that here was one

who was different. They did not spot Jesus because of His picture in *The Advocate!* They saw in Him one whose deeds matched His words (Luke 4:36).

When Jesus is asked about the source of his authority (Luke 20:2), he puts the issue back to his questioners (Luke 20:3). In effect, Jesus says "My authority will make sense to you only if you accept it."

I have heard a teacher say, "I am not teaching unless someone is learning." Jesus is saying, "I have no authority in your life unless you say so."

Of course, our Lord is Lord even over those who do not claim His sovereignty. The difference is that the believer accepts that authority. For the believer, life decisions are shaped by that authority. For the believer, unlikely hope comes from that authority. For the believer, "I know in whom I have believed."

Jesus was more than a good teacher, but in His teaching many came to believe, seeing the uncommon sight of one whose actions lived out what He spoke, whose life testified to what He taught, and whose power transformed ordinary moments into extraordinary victories. Do you recognize him?

### What Someone Else Has Said

Hans Conzelmann (*Jesus*, Fortress Press) has written: "The form of Jesus' teaching corresponds to the content. Jesus does not summon people to an objective consideration of God, the world, and (humankind), but he

grasps the hearer directly and reveals his situation through beatitudes, the prophetic call, threats, through illumination in the style of wisdom, through his parables."

### Prayer

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Teach me, Lord Jesus..."

## July 13, 2008

**Text: Mark 1:29-45**  
**"Christ as Healer"**

This lesson is about healing. The New Testament has three words that get translated into English as "heal" or "healed."

One of these words means "cured" (*iama*). One of these words means "saved" or "make whole" (*sozo*). One of these words means "to wait on" or "to serve" (*therapeuo*). In this week's study text, it is this third word that is used.

Healing takes numerous shapes in the New Testament experience, but in this week's study text, Jesus heals—waits on, serves, *therapeuo*—those who gathered at his door with need (Mark 1:34). What a remarkable thing it is to have the Son of God acting as a menial servant. (That is a literal translation of the word used here for healing.)

The Messiah is revealed not as one who rides to dramatic victory but one who in a servant mode does what He can to help. (In Mark's writing, Jesus is so concerned that persons will get the wrong idea about the Messiah that he tells those who have been healed not to tell anyone—Mark 1:43.)

There is a second incident in this Marcan account: a leper who is made clean by the touch of Jesus (Mark 1:41). The disease disappears.

In our usual mind set, this is the kind of healing that we expect Jesus to do and is what we usually pray for when we pray for healing.

Of course, this is a thrilling story! Even though Jesus sternly warned the man not to tell anyone, the man goes on the Internet and adds it to his Facebook and soon it shows up on Wikipedia! (If that does not make sense to you, ask your fifteen year old grandson or granddaughter!) This is a healing straight from the wish book.

Christ who heals brings that gift in a variety of ways.

Am I healed only if my disease no longer exists? No, I am healed if my disease no longer defines who I am. Am I healed only if I am cured in the public eye? No, I am healed if I accept that Christ the Servant has waited on me

with His will. Am I healed only if life unfolds as I wish? No, I am healed when I am made whole in my relationship with Jesus.

### What Someone Else Has Said

In *Educating Christians* (Abingdon Press), Jack Seymour, Margaret Ann Crain, and Joseph Crockett tell about a Pacific Islander named Simon: "In fact, (Simon) explains that Western medicine itself is trying to incorporate holistic healing, involving body, emotions, mind, and spirit. The traditional meaning-perspective of (Simon's) culture expected illness and healing to be spiritual; the Western system expects illness and healing to be scientific."

### Prayer

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Here we come before You, O Lord, bringing the brokenness we cannot leave behind. Sometimes we break in body; sometimes we break in spirit; sometimes our brokenness is hidden from even our deepest search. Touch and heal, O Hand of Jesus!..."

## July 20, 2008

**Text: John 13:1-8, 12-20**  
**"Christ as Servant"**

In some ways, the lesson this week is the story of two men, a contrast between two men. (Nathan Kirkpatrick, leadership education at Duke Divinity School, helped me see this.)

On the one hand, in this study text, Jesus takes a basin of water and washes the feet of his disciples (John 13:5).

It is an act of servanthood, of humility, and of practical usefulness. On the other hand, Matthew tells us that another man, Pilate, also takes a basin of water (Matthew 27:24). This man, frightened by what he did not understand, washes his hands to try to be cleansed of responsibility for Jesus' death. It is an act of self-service, of self-confusion, and of empty symbolism. What a difference!

When Jesus washed the feet of the disciples, He said He did it as an example (John 13:15).

Interestingly enough, the word translated "example" can mean either something done as a model or something done as a warning.

Certainly, our Lord offers this moment as a model for our replication, but I also see here some hint of warning: if you take on the life of servanthood, it just may lead to a cross! (Lord, I want to serve You, but I prefer to serve You in an advisory capacity!)

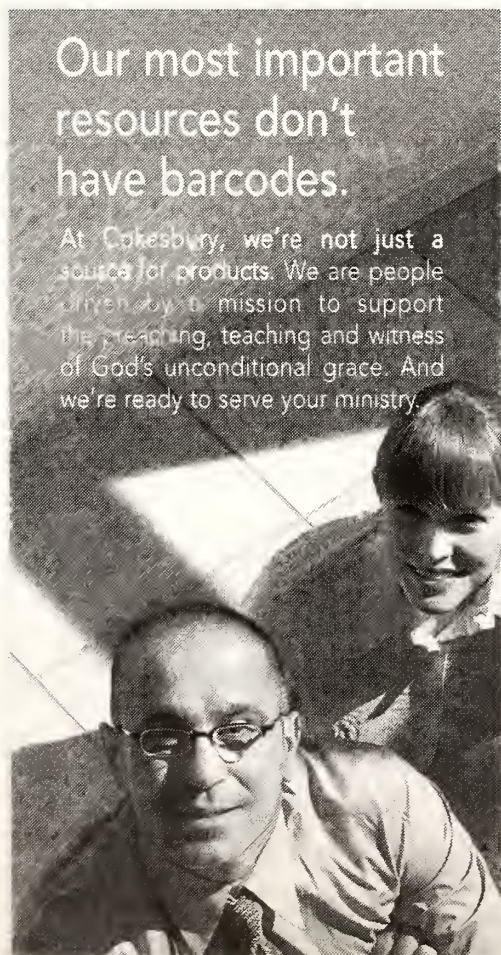
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## Poll gives Methodists highest ratings

Methodists have the highest positive ratings of religious and spiritual groups in the United States, new research by the Gallup Panel shows.

Ninety-six percent of the 1,005 persons interviewed during the March poll had either a positive or neutral view of Methodists.

Four percent had an overall negative view of Methodists.

The survey used the broader category of Methodists rather than United Methodists specifically.

Methodists are one of the four U.S. religious groups with strongly positive ratings.

The others are Jews, Roman Catholics and Baptists. Broader groups of "evangelical Christians" and "fundamentalist Christians" did not fare as well, but still rated more positively than negatively, according to an analysis of the survey.

Methodists received the highest marks in the total positive and net positive categories of the survey of "Americans' Views of U.S. Religious and Spiritual Groups."

The 45 percent net positive rating is the result of subtracting the 4 percent negative rating from the 49 percent total positive rating.

Forty seven percent of the respondents gave Methodists a "neutral" rating.

As a matter of comparison, Jews had a 42 percent positive rating, Baptists 35 percent, and Catholics 35 percent.

The random, demographically weighted poll was conducted March 24-27, 2008. Gallup says it has a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percentage points.

*From a report by the United Methodist Communications Office of Public Information.*

### Let's Journey To....

#### Israel/Palestine January 3, 2009

"**Ladies, Lovers and Leaders**" is a unique pilgrimage which will focus on the Women of the Bible and will be accompanied by professional Biblical storyteller, Dr. Tracy Radosevic. **Register Early & Save. Space is limited ~ Call today for more information.**

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## Native American resolution reaffirmed by conference

With more than 18,000 known Native Americans among the church's 8 million U.S. members, delegates to the 2008 General Conference amended and readopted a 2004 resolution on "Native American Tribal Sovereignty."

Resolutions were also passed calling for non-gambling forms of tribal economic development and continuing funding a national comprehensive plan.

The comprehensive plan was created to help United Methodists view Native

Americans as partners in ministry rather than as a mission of the church.

It seeks to make disciples for Jesus Christ within the Native American community while recognizing the unique cultures and languages of native people. The plan also helps develop and strengthen native congregations and leaders and encourage their contributions to the life of the church.

## Older Adult Recognition Day added to church calendar

By Kathy L. Gilbert \*

UMNS — An annual Older Adult Recognition Day will be held in The United Methodist Church starting in 2009 to celebrate older adults.

2008 General Conference voted to add an Older Adult Recognition Day to the special observances on the church's calendar. The day is to be observed annually, preferably during the month of May. The day is intended to provide congregations the opportunity to learn more about the issues and concerns related to aging and older adulthood.

The Committee on Older Adult Ministries, Board of Discipleship, will have responsibility for supervising and promoting the observance.

The church's Comprehensive Plan for Older Adult Ministries for 2009-2012 will emphasize intergenerational ministry and caregiving ministry.

Intergenerational ministry will build understanding between younger people and older adults by promoting the gifts, faith and wisdom of each age group.

The Census Bureau projects that by 2030, there will be more older adults in the United States than children and youth combined. Intentional church-based caregiving will become more necessary as federal entitlements are cut and family structures change.

*\* Kathy Gilbert is a UM News Service news writer based in Nashville, Tenn.*

## SEJ Wisdom and Grace Conference

Coming August 11-15 at Lake Junaluska, the conference sponsor is the SEJ Association of Older Adults. For registration details, email Pam Naplen at [pnaplen@lakejunaluska.com](mailto:pnaplen@lakejunaluska.com) or call 828-454-6656.

## Young people

*continued from page 7*

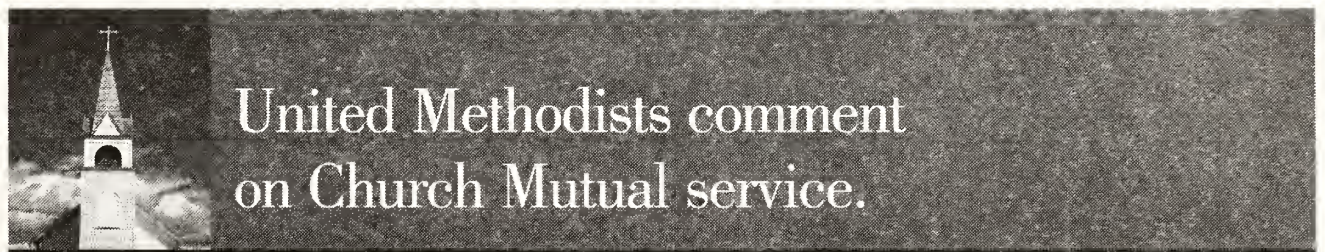
conferences and supporting youth workers. Each jurisdiction also will employ a youth ministry coordinator.

Other approved actions will ensure young people have representatives on various committees of the Board of Discipleship, the Connectional Table and local church councils.

Changes to the candidacy process toward the ordained ministry means young adults can begin with a one-year membership in a campus ministry unit or a local church. This legislation replaces a requirement that a candidate for ministry must have been a member of the church for two years.

General Conference also approved legislation requiring that a clergyperson under age 35 be on the annual conference board of ordained ministry and, when possible, on the district committee on ministry.

*\* Kathy Gilbert is a UMNS news writer.*



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# July adult Bible study

There is another dimension in this text. Pilate tried to cleanse himself, but Jesus teaches us that we need to be cleansed by others.

When we pass the peace in a service of worship, we are doing far more than greeting another ("Hey! Hope you have a nice day!"). In passing the peace, we offer the peace of Christ that can take away the pain and cloudiness that we

bring to the day.

It means a lot to me when Ada Foster or Lisa Kearns or Don McFarland (folks who sit near me at Bethany) say, "Belton, the peace of Christ be with you."

I appreciate being greeted with "Hello," but there is even more richness in having Christ's peace passed to me. In a spiritual sense, it is like having my feet washed.

How do we wash the feet of others? By meeting them at the point of their need. How do we wash the feet of others? By loving them enough to accept them even with dirt in their lives and loving them enough to want to help them get rid of the dirt.

How do we wash the feet of others? By letting our hands join the hands of Jesus in the water!

As John tells the story, this incident of foot washing is sort of a turning point. Jesus is clearly defining the kind of Savior He is. And such a saving presence leads Him to a cross. Thanks be to God for a basin of water!

## What Someone Else Has Said

In *Outward Sign and Inward Grace* (Beacon Hill Press), Rob Staples says, "Of course, foot washing may

be a symbol or sign of humility and servanthood. But in modern society those virtues may be better put into practice by the washing of dishes, or clothes, or floors, for someone in need of help..."

## Prayer

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "O Christ, wash my feet!..."

**July 27, 2008**

**Text: Matthew 16:13-23**  
**"Christ as Messiah"**

These comments, like those for earlier Sundays this month, are being written before I have a chance to see what the writers of the student's book and teacher's book have to say for these International Lesson Series studies. Let me apologize in advance if some of this is a re-hash of what you find in those resources!

For starters, this title of this lesson is repetitive. "Christ" is Greek for "the anointed one." "Messiah" is Hebrew for "the anointed one." So, we might call this: "Christ as Christ" or "Messiah as Messiah."

Let's be clear. This one whom we

call Messiah, whom we call Christ, is none other than Jesus of Nazareth. That is part of the scandal of our faith: that the Savior is one who has come in human form.

Peter gets called two things in these verses: rock (Matthew 16:18) and stumbling block (Matthew 16:23). The first term is a play on words: the name *Petros* (Peter) and the word *petra* (rock). The word for "stumbling block" is *skandalon* (scandal).

Jesus is scandalized when we misunderstand the nature of His messiahship. He still asks, "When folks get it wrong about who I am—the kind of messiah I am—what do you say; who do you say that I am?" (Matthew 16:15). (Thanks, David Harvin, for that insight.)

What mistaken notions do people have today about the kind of messiah Jesus is? Is the "prosperity gospel" a good reflection of who Jesus is? Is the spiritualized gospel with no reference to daily life reflective of who Jesus is? Is a Church built upon human values (human boundaries, human systems) reflective of who Jesus is?

What we believe about Jesus as the messiah shapes what we do as believers.

When we "get it right" (and understand Jesus indeed to be the messiah), it is not because we have figured it out. It is because God has given it to us (Matthew 16:17). It has to be that way because it is counterintuitive to see a suffering servant as the messiah. God has to reveal such a messiah to us.

## What Someone Else Has Said

Jurgen Moltmann has written (*The Way of Jesus Christ*, Fortress Press): "...Jesus is the messiah; the church is the messianic community; being a Christian means being human in the messianic sense. The name Christian is not the designation of a party. It is a promise. It is what is messianic."

## Prayer

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Holy God, Who has come to us in messianic presence in Jesus, we thank You for that gift of revelation. Move in our midst that we might live as those who know Jesus as the Christ. Move in our midst that we might live as those who serve Jesus as the Christ. Move in our midst that we might live as those who worship Jesus as the Christ..."

# conference CALENDAR

## June

- June 1 Annual Conference Orientation Sessions:  
Fayetteville district;  
St Matthews UMC, 3-5pm
- Rocky Mount district;  
Sandy Cross UMC 3-5pm
- Sanford district;  
Jonesboro UMC 3-5pm
- Goldsboro district; St Paul UMC 7-9pm
- Raleigh district;  
St Marks UMC 7-9pm
- Rockingham district;  
St Luke UMC,  
Laurinburg, 7-9pm

- 11-14 Annual Conference Session; Greenville Convention Center, Greenville, NC

- 21-24 UMW South Atlantic Regional School; Kentucky Wesleyan College, Owensboro, KY

- 23-28 Summer Breakaway; Louisburg College

- 24 Pastor Moving Day

## July

- 12-19 Appalachian Trail Hike
- 14-18 Raleigh District Creative Arts Camp; First UMC; Cary
- 15-19 Jurisdictional Conference; Lake Junaluska
- 21-26 ACS Annual Conference Session for Youth; Methodist University; Fayetteville
- 23-26 UMW School of Christian Mission; Methodist University; Fayetteville

For more information on upcoming North Carolina Conference events, visit the conference web site at [www.nccumc.org](http://www.nccumc.org) and click on "Calendar" at the top of the page.

# CLASSIFIEDS

## SUMMER MISSION OPPORTUNITY

at Lake Junaluska: Camp Adventure located at Lake Junaluska Conference & Retreat Center is seeking volunteer hosts for its 2008 summer camping season. Volunteers are needed to assist with check-in of campers, cleaning of bath houses and general upkeep of campground including some mowing. Volunteers are given one meal a day in either the Terrace or Lambuth Dining room and a free campsite for the duration of their stay. For more information call Cindy O'Byrne at 828-454-6748 or email [cobyrne@lakejunaluska.com](mailto:cobyrne@lakejunaluska.com).

**NEEDED:** overhead projector for praise and worship services at Norman UMC. Call 910-997-1962.

**NEEDED:** Small riding pony for riding ministry and family income. Call 910-997-1962.

**FOR RENT:** Nice, fully furnished apartment at Lake Junaluska - 2 bedrooms, cable TV, \$45 night, 3 night minimum, 1 night deposit. Call 828-456-8046.

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# DEATHS

MURRAY, Eric O. (Raleigh District: retired), died May 17. The funeral was held May 19 in Durham.





**Buckhorn UMC, Moncure**

The Junior Class of Buckhorn United Methodist Church of Moncure, collected items to be shipped to an Army Reserve friend in Iraq, CW4 Jennings C. Lantz from Sanford. Even though the class is small in number, they collected 20 pounds of items, including magazines, snacks, games, and hygiene items. Each student wrote personal cards of support and encouragement to him and our troops overseas. It took approximately one week for the package to make its way to CW4 Lantz. The members of the class are: Kylie Bethea, Kolt Jones, Jarod Wheeler, Kaitlyn Wheeler, Garrett Cotten, Brandon O'Quinn, and teachers, Jane Bethea and Angela Oldham.

# around the CONFERENCE



**Christ UMC, Chapel Hill  
and All Saints' UMC, Raleigh**

Members of Christ UMC in Chapel Hill (Burlington District), a congregation founded by the Rev. Raegan May in 1995, present a check in the amount of \$50,000 in support of All Saints' UMC to the Rev. Greg Moore and members of the newly established congregation. All Saints' UMC meets weekly for worship at the Brier Creek Community Center in Raleigh.



**Faith Harbor UMC, Surf City**

Faith Harbor UMC in Surf City, celebrated Easter Sunday with three services, along with a community-wide barbecue following the 11:00 service. The total attendance was 724 people, including the people in this photograph who were part of the 275 braving the 41 degree temperature to celebrate Sunrise Service on the Intracoastal Waterway. The pastor of Faith Harbor is the Rev. Jesse C. Staton, Jr.

## Submitting Around the Conference Information

Items can be submitted to [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org). The deadline is the 5th day of the month. All articles and photos subject to editing. Photographs or art should be recorded in the largest size and highest resolution possible. Send in JPG or TIFF formats. Please send articles and photos in separate files. Photos should not be embedded in articles or in photo viewing programs.



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## African-American clergy leadership event "Claiming our Humanity"

The first African-American clergy event, "Claiming our Humanity" was held at Lake Junaluska April 7-9. It was designed to help clergy build greater self-awareness of soul, spirit, and mind to help enhance effective ministry. Other goals included improving clergy morale, decreasing ministry burnout, and preventing clergy misconduct.

This event was planned to look at ways pastors can grow in health and wholeness in their total life to help clergy to take care of themselves so that can more effectively relate to their churches and family.

Dr. Carl Arrington, director of African-American ministries at Lake Junaluska and Jim Robey, North Alabama Conference consultant served as conveners for this event.

There were in attendance thirty-one persons from five annual conferences and five persons representing the North Carolina Conference—Dora Dorsey, Marcus Singleton, Gail Myers, Linda Harris and Lawrence E. Johnson.



## Cary confirmands walk to support Tisch Brain Tumor Center at Duke

First United Methodist Church Cary welcomed into its membership the 89 members of the confirmation class of 2007-08. A team of 30 volunteer parents, led by Associate Pastor Rick Wilkerson, provided a 32-week journey of faith with a variety of experiences for the class.

The confirmands followed the "Claim the Name" curriculum each week in class, visited Jewish, Roman Catholic and Interdenominational places of worship, participated in a fall retreat at Camp Rockfish, ran a bake sale and walked in the Angels Among Us event to raise support for the Tisch Brain Tumor Center at Duke.

Each had individual interviews with Wilkerson, and celebrated their relationship with the Lord on Confirmation Sunday, where they affirmed their baptismal vows and made their membership commitments.

## Solid Rock UMC hosts family weekend at Rockfish

Solid Rock UMC in Olivia recently hosted a Family Weekend at the Rockfish Outdoor Center.

The weekend was open to families in the Fayetteville District to strengthen marriages and incorporate families into the experience of a family getaway. Thirteen couples and their families shared a time of renewal and encouragement in the three-day experience.

Pastoral staff from Solid Rock UMC provided leadership for the event entitled "Some Assembly Required." The Rev. Dante and Anisa Poole led workshops that opened couples in attendance with new growth for their relationships.

The format for the weekend was comprised of work sessions along with break-out sessions for the men and women to discuss roles and needs of each gender. Saturday night included a romantic candlelit dinner provided by the camp staff, which became a

highlight of the event for the couples.

The couples concluded the weekend with a Sunday morning worship service and renewal of marriage vows.

Mealtimes were shared as families. While couples were in workshops the children were involved in camp activities led by the camp staff. Saturday afternoon was set aside as a time for the families to share in an activity on the camp together.

The weekend provided bonding time for families as well as an enrichment experience for the couples attending.

This family weekend is an annual event sponsored by Solid Rock and hosted by Camp Rockfish.

Plans are already in the works for continuing this event next year and possibly adding an event for the fall season.

For more information contact the Rev. Gil Wise, senior pastor at Solid Rock, via email at [leadpastor@solidrockumc.org](mailto:leadpastor@solidrockumc.org).



Thirteen couples and their families attended a family weekend hosted by Solid Rock UMC at the Rockfish Camp and Retreat Center.

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# 2008 Annual Conference members approve changes to conference structure and sale of current headquarters

a 2.21% increase over the budget adopted in the 2007 Annual Conference for 2009. The new budget will be raised in 2009 for use in 2010.

The conference adopted the Health Insurance proposal to keep the same coverage and premiums, for the fourth year in a row, while raising the life-time maximum from \$2 to \$5 million and increasing mental health benefits.

See “AC overview,” page 4

The conference gathered under the Cross, lifting it high as the proclamation of faith, the pathway of service. Members were empowered to return home with renewed spirit of offering the high calling of God.

— Adapted from the 2008 Conference Program Recommendation and Reports

Using the theme, "Witnessing in the light of God," the conference was held June 11-14 for the third year in Greenville.

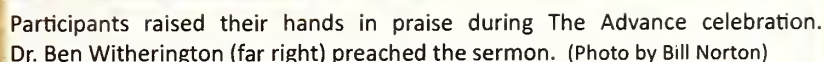
One of the first actions taken by the conference was to approve a modification of the conference structure, changing the five circles of ministry to four teams (Outreach Ministry, Leadership, Christian Formation, and Stewardship).

“We are in the 9th year of our current Conference Structure,” said Emily Innes, chair of the Task Force on Structure Review. She pointed out that many things in the current structure were working well but “we are aware that some adjustments are needed.”

Committee members learned during their early work that the language of the present structure was sometimes confusing.

“We wanted to use simple language that easily conveyed the purpose of our groupings,” Innes said. “We moved from circles, which could convey silos or territory, to teams—teams of people moving out to empower the local church to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

Under the new structure, the CCT remains the center for visioning, mission interpretation, budgeting, and accountability. Communications surrounds the new structure and has representation on each team



## 60th anniversary of The Advance and NCC's "heritage of generosity" celebrated

By Reggie Ponder, Jr. \*

2008 Annual Conference members observed the 60th Anniversary of The Advance for Christ and His Church and celebrated the conference's "heritage of generosity." The Thursday night celebration included an offering yielding more than \$5,230 for The Advance. Part of the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM), The Advance is a voluntary, designated, second-mile giving arm of The United Methodist Church.

David Malloy, Jr., annual conference liaison for The Advance, told the conference he appreciated the full support for The Advance from the NC Conference delegation at this year's General Conference. Thanking the conference for giving 100 percent of its world service apportionment, Malloy said there's "strength in numbers," including the more than \$37 million given last year through The Advance. "There is strength in our connection as United Methodists," Malloy said. Through Advance giving, churches can dig wells and build churches, he said.

See "The Advance," page 2





### Probationary Elders

Front Row: Gertrude Brenda Jones, Vermel Harrison Taylor, Jessie Shuman Larkins, Christie Ann Burley. 2nd Row: Ellen Margaret McCubbin, Mary Frances McClure, Martha Ann Kimball McLean, Nancy McGee Willard, Lisa Naa-Shormey Yebuah, Benjamin David Alexander. Back Row: Hannah Pinckney McManus, Ronald Edward Gurganus, Douglas Jay Wagner, Bishop Gwinn, David Alan Foushee, Owen Edwards Barrow, Harold Cleveland May, Laura Autry Dunlap. (Photos this section by Bill Norton)



### Pastors transferring into the NC Conference

Sang Seon Park, Bishop Gwinn, Kwan Seok Kim



### Ordained as Deacon in Full Connection

Jo Elaine Harris, Bishop Gwinn



### Ordained as Elders in Full Connection

Front Row: Donna McClain Thompson, Cheryl Wynn Brown. 2nd Row: Heather Heinzman Lear, Fred Douglas Johnson, Bishop Gwinn, Thurman Adair Horney, Jr., LuAnn Herring Charlton.

## The Advance from page 1

Malloy noted "the heritage of generosity is in the DNA of the NC Annual Conference" as he thanked churches "who have found their passion and have participated in second-mile giving."

Bishop Al Gwinn said he's thankful for Malloy, whose father is a retired conference Elder, and for the leadership of conference members Sam Dixon, Edith Gleaves and layperson Emily Innes at GBGM. Dixon and Gleaves are on the staff, and Innes is a director and officer in the Women's Division. "Look what leadership North Carolina is providing the whole world in terms of this mission effort," Gwinn said.

A highlight of the service was a skit that used humor to drive home the point of God's call to generous giving. Pastor Linda Harris portrayed a young girl learning about missions and generosity in Sunday school, while the Rev. John Strother presented "Rev. Ferris Scee," pastor of "Golden Calf UMC." Gradually, the girl persuaded the misguided pastor that his selfish view of the church's purpose was...well...misguided.

Dr. Ben Witherington of Asbury Theological Seminary preached the sermon, reminding the congregation that "the heart of worship leads to the heart of service." He explored the topic of "true worship" using the visions of Isaiah, Ezekiel and John of Patmos. Isaiah's vision in the Temple was "a close encounter of the first kind with the Almighty God" in which he understood that he was a creature and God is the Creator. "This vision is what fuels our service, our ministry and our mission," he said.

He explained that God condescends to come and "inhabits our praise" when believers bow down before him. "We are in no way being set up in a partnership of equals in worship," he said. "Worship is not fellowship. God condescends and remains God." Witherington said, "Idolatry is the polar opposite of true worship. When you worship God you realize only God is worthy of unconditional worship and service."

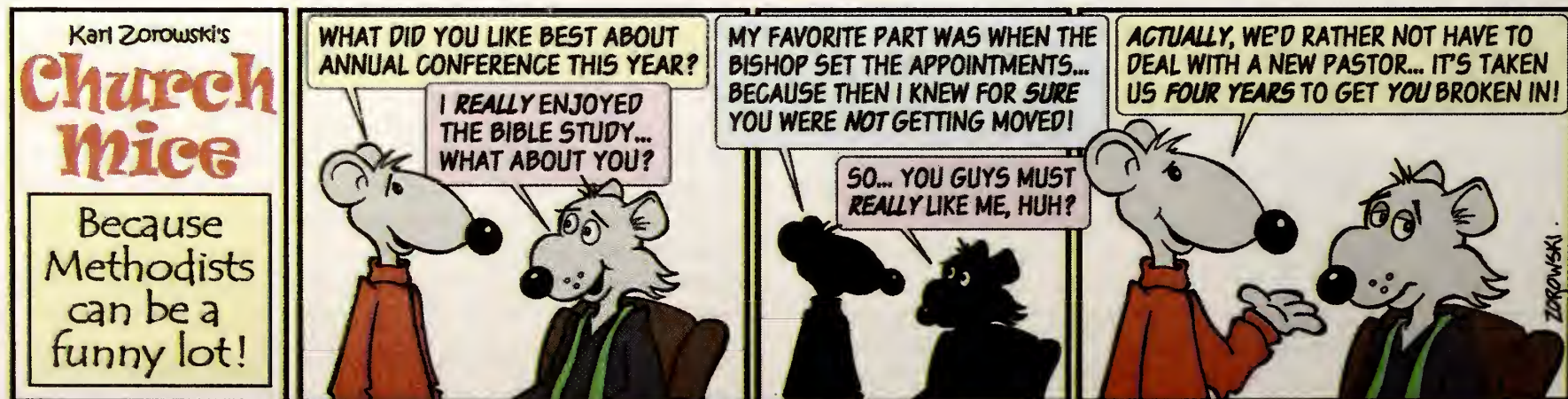
Worship is not entertainment, he said, and only two questions matter: Was God glorified? Were the people edified? Worship is about giving honor to God, not entertainment, he said. Worship is "giving God what he desires and requires" and "worship is not about giving people what they desire and crave."

Worshippers are transformed by worship that focuses on the all-sufficiency of God, he said. "Salvation is not the point and goal of human history," said Witherington. "Salvation is the means. Worshipping God is the end."

\* Reggie Ponder, Jr., a conference Elder, is a reporter with the Henderson Daily Dispatch.



David Malloy (right), a member of The Advance staff, presents to Bishop Gwinn a reminder of mission work made possible through the ministry. (Photo by Reggie Ponder, Jr.)





# Making disciples through lay and clergy evangelism

By Reggie Ponder, Jr. \*

"Go fish!"

The two-word slogan, emblazoned on bright yellow stickers and t-shirts, encouraged members of the NC Annual Conference to be faithful in fulfilling Jesus' Great Commission to make disciples of all nations.

Members of the Conference Commission on Evangelism wore the shirts and distributed the decals during the 2008 session of Annual Conference. This year's theme was "Witnessing...in the Light of God."

Bishop Al Gwinn said that while the church spends a lot of time talking about "fishing" for new disciples of Jesus Christ, "we want to see the fish from time to time."

## The fullness of God

In that spirit, Gwinn introduced Don Logner from Cedar Grove UMC in the Burlington District attending Annual Conference for the second time in his third year as a member of the church.

Logner told his fellow conference members he had spent more than two decades of his life "not having a clue" before God led him to the truth.

He explained that God had used his son to lead him to the church.

After a fire at Cedar Grove reduced the beautiful stone building to "a pile of stone and ashes," the congregation rebuilt the church and his son—fascinated by the new structure—wanted to see inside the new building.

At first, Logner's wife took their child to church. But when his son invited him to join them on a special Sunday when he had a part in the service, "I couldn't really tell him 'no,'" Logner said.

An acquaintance, John Hughes, was at the church on that Sunday and he greeted Logner warmly. He went on to become Logner's mentor in the Christian faith.

Logner explained he had been confused about the nature of Jesus Christ, wondering why Christians claimed to worship only God yet also seemed preoccupied with praising Jesus.

But during a Bible study session at the church, he suddenly felt warmth, assurance and revelation as God showed him that Jesus is the "fullness of God" who appeared in the flesh.

He began calling family and friends with a question: "Do you guys really understand who Jesus is?"

God had "thrown a wrench into everything" to let him know how important he is to God, Logner said, describing himself as "blessed" to have received the revelation of Jesus' divine nature.

He said he has found the church "a second home." No longer alienated from the community, he has discovered authentic community in the church and come to appreciate the "global community" of those who follow Jesus Christ. "We're God's children," Logner said. "This is a family. This is the family of God."



Bob Mangum (left) receives the clergy Denman Award award from Tim Reaves.

Although most of his family and friends still consider him crazy, he said he feels compelled to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. He challenged the whole conference to find someone and let them know

Jesus Christ is the Lord, "the fullness of God walking amongst us," who "loved us enough to come into our midst."

Logner told that last year during Annual Conference he had become friends with Joe Pearce, a longtime lay member from Louisburg UMC in the Raleigh District. This year the two new friends—very different in age and experience but bound together by a common faith—roomed together during the conference.

## Denman Awards

The Rev. Tim Reaves celebrated the ministry of evangelism by presenting the Denman Evangelism Awards for laity and clergy, in memory of Dr. Harry Denman.

Reaves explained the awards honor "persons from our conference who are living Dr. Denman's legacy."

Denman was a Methodist Layman known for his commitment to Christian witness in all activities of his life.

Don and Dotto Johnson, a lay couple from Jackson UMC, received the lay award. The Johnsons serve in numerous positions at their home church and are active in the Lay Witness Mission movement.

Their service in the Lay Witness mission includes teaching children to pray, giving a copy of the New Testament to each child, sharing the plan of salvation with the children and leading them in prayer at the altar.

The Rev. Bob Mangum received



The Rev. Tim Reaves (right) of the Commission on Evangelism presented the Denman Award for laity to Don & Dotto Johnson of Jackson UMC. (Photos by Reggie Ponder, Jr.)

the clergy award. Mangum served 13 years as pastor of Prospect UMC and was the first full-time director of the Southeastern Jurisdiction Association for Native American Ministries (SEJANAM). Mangum has led work teams to Bolivia and an endowment has been established in his name for the Bolivia ministry.

Since retiring, Mangum has continued to serve the Church as pastor of the Sandy Plains and Hickory Grove congregations. His leadership has helped Hickory Grove grow from a weekly worship attendance of 20-25 to the current 60-70. Mangum also was the founding director of the Robeson County Church and Community Center.

Reaves' evangelism report also

included an update on the Academy for Christian Witness and an announcement of the new Lay Academy for Christian Witness.

\* Reggie Ponder, Jr., a conference Elder, is a reporter with the Henderson Daily Dispatch.

## From the EDITOR

Printing of the August issue of the NCC Christian Advocate will be delayed approximately one week in order to include news of Jurisdictional Conference held at Lake Junaluska from July 16-19.

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# Annual Conference overview *continued from page 1*

Cautioning the conference not to get "accustomed to no increase (in health insurance premiums)," Gray Southern, chair of the Insurance Committee, said "for now, please note that we are running well ahead of both national and state trends in not having increases."

A reason for not increasing the rates, Southern explained, was due to "lower than actuarially predicted claims." Further, he said the Insurance Committee had seen an increase in wellness and preventative care, "reducing claims for actual illnesses and stopping deteriorating health situations before they got worse" and more costly.

Upon the recommendation of the Task Force on Retiree Benefits, the Conference decided that retiring clergy must have 180 months or 15 years of coverage in the Conference Health Insurance plan to receive the maximum benefit at retirement.

"We have been following a pay-as-you-go plan for the past 60 or so years in regards to retiree health benefits," said Gray Southern, chair of the task force. "As of Jan. 1, 2008, our total accumulated health care liability for retirees is approximately \$49,600,000."

He cautioned that if the current approach continued, the retirement liability will rise to \$59,800,000. He further explained that with no changes, the budget line for retiree health care costs would rise to as much as \$5.6 million by 2037.

The adopted plan permits clergy not in the Conference Health Insurance Plan to enroll in November. By enrolling and continuing in the plan, these clergy will be able to receive the maximum funding by the Conference Board of Pensions for their health insurance in retirement.

The Conference Board of Trustees was granted permission to sell the current conference headquarters

building and land at 1307 Glenwood Avenue in Raleigh and the adjoining Raleigh Towne Apartments site which is under a land-use lease.

The Conference approved the use of proceeds from the sale for the construct a new headquarters building sized up to 35,000 square feet. The land was previously purchased near the intersection of US 70 and I-40, east of Garner in the Greenfield Park area.

An agreement between the trustees and the purchaser, permits the Conference to lease its current offices for up to two and a half years while the new building is completed.

Resolutions adopted during the conference called for: Humane Mental Health Reform in NC; Support of Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Bullying; Stopping Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Raids and Detention; Opposition to Intolerance and Racism on North Carolina Radio Stations; Fair Treatment and Support of Undocumented Young People Continuing Education through the NC College System.

Two defeated resolutions called for: Holding U.S. Civilian Political Leaders Responsible for the War in Iraq while Fully Supporting Military Personnel and Recommended Changes by a Nonpartisan Commission in National Health Care Insurance Coverage for all Americans.

Marcia McFee was the music and worship leader for the conference; Ben Witherington, one of the top evangelical scholars in the world, led the Bible study; and Leonard Sweet, teacher, author, and national religious leader, was the guest speaker for the Lay Leadership Event.

Resident Bishop Al Gwinn, in addition to presiding during the conference, delivered the State of the Church address and the sermon during the ordination service.

## Other items before the conference:

- Unanimous endorsement was given to Paul Leeland as the NC Conference nominee for the episcopacy.
- Four individuals were re-elected to conference positions for four years: Emily Innes, lay leader; Christine



Cokesbury UMC in Fuquay-Varina was presented the Jack and Kay Crum Prophetic Ministry Award. Holding the award is Janet Chilcote, Cokesbury pastor, shown with Kay and Jack (seated) Crum. (Photo by Bill Norton)

Dodson, treasurer; James R. Bryan, secretary; and George Speake, statistician.

- A total of 110 congregations were recognized as Acts 2 Churches, demonstrating the qualities of Radical Hospitality, Passionate Worship, Spiritual Formation, and Risk-Taking Ministry to the World (see pages 8-9).
- The minimum salary approved for pastors under full-time appointments will be \$40,319 in 2009. Utilities were set at \$2,200 and \$4,000 was the recommended travel reimbursement allowance.
- An evening of celebration for the 60-years of the Advance was held.
- One person was commissioned to probationary membership as a Deacon, 17 were commissioned as probationary Elders, one person was ordained a Deacon in Full Connection, six were ordained Elders in Full Connection, three clergy transferred into the Conference, and 35 persons, for the first time, received a license for pastoral ministry.
- Recognition was given to 18 retiring pastors, and 12 pastors and 14 spouses were remembered during a memorial service.
- Celebration was given for the announcement of the J. Allen Norris Scholarship by the Conference Commission on Higher Education and Campus Ministry. The late Allen Norris served as

conference treasurer and president of Louisburg College.

- Twelve local churches were recognized with Lay Ministry of the Year awards.
- C. Franklin Grill was presented as retiring as conference historian, and William C. Simpson was introduced as the new historian.
- Cokesbury UMC in Fuquay-Varina was recognized for its Radical Hospitality with the Jack and Kay Crum Prophetic Ministry Award. Three other congregations were named finalists: Avent Ferry and Westover in Raleigh for AventWest Children Mentoring Program, Fairmont in Raleigh for Sunday Night Live, and Wesley Fellowship at Duke University for past and present Radical Reconciliation in Durham.
- Cokesbury Bookstores donated a total of \$12,879.76 for the clergy pension fund.
- Four pastors starting new communities of faith were introduced and prayed over.
- Goldston UMC was recognized with the Key Taylor Award. Situated in a community of less than 500 people, the church worked for hunger relief for their next door neighbors and in the world, tutored struggling children, repaired homes, had mission trips to Mississippi, and joined an AMEZ congregation in rebuilding that church.
- The Rev. Robert Flynn of Swansboro UMC was recognized by Conference United Methodist Men for his support of men's ministry.
- Randolph R. "Ran" Few was presented the Saints of God Award by the UM Foundation, a financial stewardship ministry serving conference churches, individuals, and institutions.
- Sandy Smith, administrative assistant to the Bishop who is retiring in October, was recognized for 26 years of service with the Conference.
- The 2009 Annual Conference will meet June 10-13 in the Greenville Convention Center.

\* Bill Norton is conference director of communications and Advocate editor.



Annual Conference members had many pages of resolutions, reports, and recommendations to study.



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**Contact:** [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org) or (919) 832-9560 with any questions.



# Budget approved, includes clergy minimum salary increase

By Reggie Ponder, Jr. \*

The 2008 session of the NC Annual Conference adopted a budget of just over \$20 million.

Ferrell Blount, chairperson of the Conference Council on Finance and Administration (CF&A), presented a \$20.1 million budget to the conference, explaining that much input and prayer had gone into the preparation of the budget. The budget is to be raised in 2009 and spent in 2010.

Emily Innes, conference lay leader, talked about the work of the Connectional Table in presenting ministry needs to CF&A, focusing on empowering the local church to be in ministry.

CF&A is sensitive to small churches and the need to control the growth of apportionments, which make up a relatively large proportion of the budget for a lot of smaller congregations, Blount said.

There were two motions from the floor to add additional items to the budget, though neither passed. This is the second year the conference has adopted the budget as presented without changes.

Ralph Denning made a motion to include \$50,000 in funding for the MERCI Center. The Rev. Jim Huskins, the center's director, spoke in support of the motion but also encouraged congregations to support MERCI through the Advance.

If churches gave \$2 per member each year, that would exceed the center's current budget, Huskins said. "That is the way we would prefer to be funded," he noted. But he said the center also would be glad to get \$50,000 through the conference budget in 2010.

Laura Little of St. James UMC in Greenville asked if the conference supports MERCI in the current budget.

Innes replied there is \$60,000 in the budget for MERCI this year through the Missions budget, even though MERCI is not listed as a separate line item.

Blount said CF&A would not support the amendment to add \$50,000 for MERCI. Items that come up on the conference floor "tend to be viewed in a vacuum without seeing the consideration each line gets in the development process," Blount said.

Denning's motion did not pass.

A motion by the Rev. Bill Jeffries to place \$25,000 in the budget for operating expenses for the clergy counseling and consultation office was tabled.

Other motions addressed increases related to minimum compensation for clergy. The Rev. Johnnie Wright presented the equitable compensation report, which called for a \$276 increase in minimum salary for full-time clergy from \$38,806 to \$39,082.

The Commission on Equitable Compensation also recommended an increase in the travel allowance for full-time pastors from \$3,000 to \$4,000. The utilities allowance remained at \$2,200.

The conference voted to raise the proposed minimum salary by \$1,513 to \$40,319 to bring the salary in line with the 3.9 percent increase in Consumer Price Index at the end of 2007. The salary for student pastors was set at 65 percent of minimum full-time salary to equal \$26,207.

During the discussion on minimum compensation, the Rev. Tracy Clayton raised the issue of justice and said she wanted to "put a face on minimum salary." She mentioned home heating costs, travel costs, and clergy indebtedness because of seminary loans.

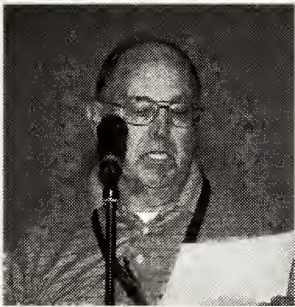
Lay members of the conference argued both sides of the issue, some saying it would put too much pressure on congregations and others saying it was a matter of fairness to pastors.

The conference also passed a motion by Steve Formo, former chairman of equitable compensation for the conference, calling for a salary structure study that would consider such items as ordination status and years of service.

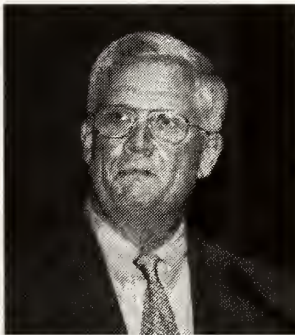
The Rev. Jerry Schronce spoke against the motion, saying "We all do the same work. We should get the same pay."

The Conference approved the recommended \$100,388 as the 2009 salary for district superintendents. The amount was based on the average for the top 25 pastors' salaries in the Conference for the last year.

\* Reggie Ponder, Jr., a conference Elder, is a reporter with the Henderson Daily Dispatch.



Ralph Denning



Ferrell Blount



By Reggie Ponder, Jr. \*

Bishop Alfred Wesley Gwinn, Jr. challenged clergy and laity alike to be faithful witnesses to the Gospel during the 2008 session of the North Carolina Annual Conference.

The conference theme was "Witnessing...in the Light of God," and the bishop's remarks — both formal and informal — kept that theme before the people throughout the four days.

As the conference recognized the first group of "Acts 2 congregations," Gwinn described them as "wonderful, beautiful, upward spirals of health and vitality" and said "we want to come alongside any and every congregation" and eventually be able to recognize all as Acts 2 churches.

In his State of the Church address during the opening worship service, Gwinn reminded the conference "the church is a divinely empowered instrument of God's grace."

# Be faithful witnesses, Bishop tells conference

The church's vision of a transformed world "is in the heart of God," he said. "It brought Jesus to this planet."

He noted many good signs of clergy excellence and effectiveness in the conference and said he appreciated the Duke Endowment's commitment of \$12 million over seven years in support for clergy health.

Churches around the conference are responding to "a deeper, more prophetic call" to be deeply involved in ministry in the world, Gwinn said.

The bishop challenged conference members to remember that God owns the church, and leaders have "a fiduciary responsibility to God."

He shared several questions and insisted churches be "doggedly focused" on answering them:

- "Whose lives are we to change and in what way?"
- "What do we believe?"

See "Faithful witnesses," page 8

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# Clergy and clergy spouses remembered at All Saints

By Reggie Ponder, Jr. \*

The Rev. Lisa Naa-Shormey Yebuah, in a sermon during the All Saints Celebration at the 2008 Annual Conference, described recently deceased conference clergy and clergy spouses as engaged in the "eternal vocation" of "witness to life."

Yebuah spoke of being "captivated by the preaching moment" as she was growing up in the church. She was intrigued by the congregational feedback in the black church.

"Can I get a witness?" was more than a rhetorical device in that context, she said, explaining the ques-

tion reminded the congregation that the Word doesn't belong just to the preacher. "We were to be living sermons," Yebuah said.

Like the disciples in Acts 1 who are "seemingly fixated on Temple matters" but hear from Jesus a call to be his witnesses throughout the world, believers in every generation experience Jesus' "holy interruption in our lives," she said.

The disciples discover the work of the Kingdom is not Jesus' work alone, but "great responsibility rests on them, too," Yebuah said. "He doesn't ask if they are ready," just tells them what they will be—witnesses.

Jesus tells the disciples to go to Judea and speak with power that Jesus is Lord, and go to Samaria and speak to those that others won't speak to, she said. Yebuah suggested that if someone stumbled into the service they might have been perplexed by the sermon on witness: Is

it not a time of loss and mourning? But the friends who have gone before are "wrapped up in work that we can't do right now" because "our voices are not yet strong enough," she said. "We are witnesses to 26 lives well lived. They died as those who were cloaked in Christ."

## Remembered during the service:

Benjamin Franklin Musser, Troy James Barrett, Herman Fred Davis, Daniel Mercer Forbes Jr., Luther Martin Peele Jr., Paul Cecil Millwood, Ralph Isaac Epps, Haywood Linwood Harrell, Robert Freeman Moore, Eric Octavious Murray; Harriett Fleming Petteway, Dorothy Jackson Massey, William Edward Buffaloe, Edith Ann Fowlkes Berry, Roberta Fields Carruth, Dorothy Anita Thompson Dillon, Etolia Stribling Vale, Susan Alice Waller Miller, Elma Bundy Fulford, Alice Blanche Houser Crew, Kathleen McCormick MacLean, Jean Lough Wilson, Mary Virginia Brittingham Coble, Walton N. Bass, Jr., John R. Blue, and Rosemary Todd Wynn.

\* Reggie Ponder, Jr., a conference Elder, is a reporter with the Henderson Daily Dispatch.



## Clergy partner officer elections and memorial service part of 2008 Clergy Partners luncheon

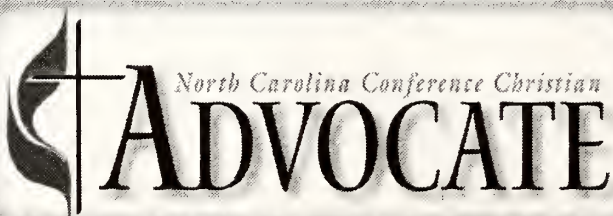
The Clergy Partners Association remembered clergy partners who have died since the last luncheon at Annual Conference. This year, 14 clergy partners were remembered who had died since the 2007 luncheon. Individuals honored were Edith Ann F. Berry, William E. Buffaloe, Roberta F. Carruth, Mary Virginia B. Coble, Alice H. Crew, Dorothy T. Dillon, Elma B. Fulford, Kathleen M. MacLean, Dorothy J. Massey, Susan W. Miller, Harriett F. Petteway, Etolia S. Vale, Jean L. Wilson and Rosemary Wynn.

Officers for 2008-09 elected during the luncheon were: (L to R): Elaine Teague, president; Joyce Gwinn, bishop's wife; Judy Lister, outreach chairperson and historian; Annette Wright, retreat coordinator and registrar; Joan Bisogno, secretary; Tanya Edwards, newsletter editor; Judy Farmer, member of nominating committee; Kim King, luncheon coordinator; Dianna Whittaker, president ex-officio; and Joanne Mentzer, treasurer. Not shown: Jimmie Shuler, nominating chairperson; members of Nominating Committee: Tina Reeves, Betsy Williams, Mary Ann Brown and Donna Herring; and Clergy Care Committee members Nita Hill and Rick Hill.



## J. Allen Norris Scholarship announced

Celebration was given for the announcement of the J. Allen Norris Scholarship by the Conference Commission on Higher Education and Campus Ministry. The late Dr. J. Allen Norris served as conference treasurer and president of Louisburg College. ABOVE: Bishop Alfred Gwinn Jr. presents a token of appreciation to Beth Norris, widow of Dr. Norris. (Photo by Reggie Ponder, Jr.)



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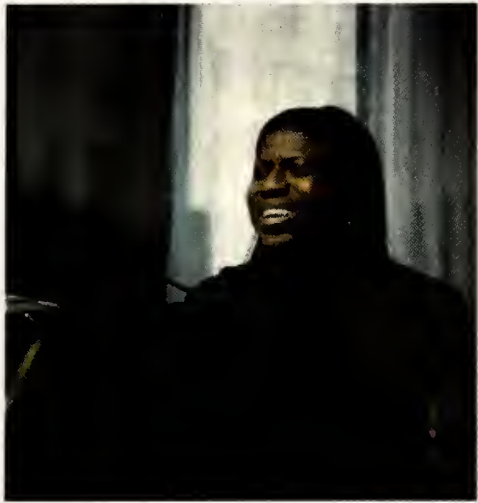
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The Rev. Lisa Naa-Shormey Yebuah delivered the sermon at the 2008 All Saints celebration. (Photo by Bill Norton)



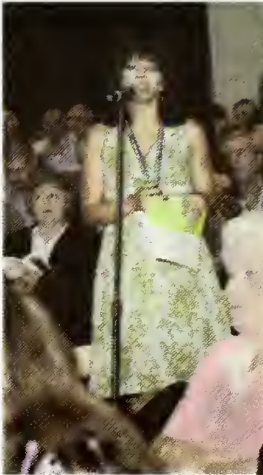
First time licensed local pastors recognized at Annual Conference were (names are not in the order to match the photograph): Benjamin David Alexander, Nathan Daniel Arledge, Ramon Elwood Atkins, Jeffrey Ryan Babajtis, Daniel Ray Baer, Jr., Rochele A. Bailey-George, James Robert Bliss, Ronnie Ray Byrd, Timothy Davis Catlett, Alice Wade Davis, Elizabeth Ann Gaines, Gloria Winston Holloway, David Earl Jones, Laura Fine Ledford, Martha Claire Lewis, Eric Alan Marshburn, John Michael McAllister, Ellen Margaret McCubbin, José Fernando Mora, Anthony Lance Moreau, Gypsy Moore Murdaugh, Christopher Charlie O'Briant, Alfonso Piacentini, Jr., Roy Lee Rodgers, Ellen Webb Rose, Richard Paul Russell, Edwin Earl Rutenkroger, Michael Field Sadtler, William Arnold Saunders, Marcus John Singleton, Charles Cooper Smith, Jr., James Robert Stainback III, Raymond Hoge Tavenner, José Luis Villaseñor (Photo by Reggie Ponder, Jr.)



ABOVE: (L-R) Epiphanie Mujawimana and the Rev. Greg Jenks of the ZOE Ministry share a moment of personal privilege. Jenks heads the ministry with orphans in Africa, and Mujawimana is the director of the empowerment program. (Photo by Reggie Ponder, Jr.)



ABOVE: Worship and music leader Marcia McFee (foreground) leads the singing. Also pictured are (L-R) Conference Secretary the Rev. James Bryan, Bishop Al Gwinn, Conference Lay Leader Emily Innes, Dennis Draper who serves on the Conference Secretary's staff, and Goldsboro District Superintendent Chuck Cook, conference parliamentarian. (Photo by Bill Norton)



ABOVE: Cookie Santiago addresses the conference. (Photo by Bill Norton)



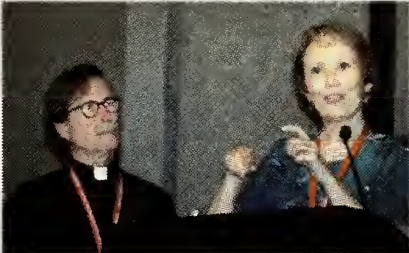
Retiring district Lay Leaders: (L-R) Sandra Ray, Elizabeth City; Ted Thomas, Sanford; and Fred Hight, Rocky Mount completed their term in office. Conference Lay Leader Emily Innes (Right) presented a plaque to teach to honor them for their leadership. During the conference, Innes was re-elected to her post for a second 4-year term. (Photo by Bill Norton)



(L-R) The Rev. Robert Flynn receives the G. Ross Freeman Leadership Award from Barry Merrill, conference president of United Methodist Men. The award recognized Flynn's strong support of men's ministry. Flynn is among 49 pastors from the nine-state Southeastern Jurisdiction who have received the award in the last seven years. He is the third pastor from the NC Conference to receive the award. The 40 active men in the Swansboro UMC fellowship have raised almost \$50,000 for world, national, conference, community, and local church projects. Under Flynn's leadership, the men conduct Disciple Bible study as an outreach in a prison. Through his Wednesday morning Bible study, the men have learned how to involve others in praying for each other and for needs beyond the group. (Photo by Reggie Ponder, Jr.)

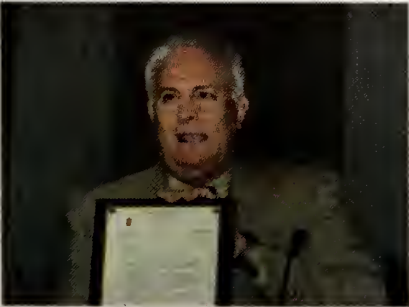


Rockingham District Superintendent Leonard Fairley administers Holy Communion.



The Rev. Paul Stallworth and the Rev. Laurie Hayes Coffman talk about the Unity Dialogue. (Photo by Reggie Ponder, Jr.)

BELOW: Lay members of the 2008 annual conference stand during the Lay Executive Session. (Photo by Bill Norton)



The Rev. Arthur Warren holds a plaque presented to the Rev. C. Franklin Grill who retired as conference historian. (Photo by Reggie Ponder, Jr.)





# Sweet outlines problem Christianity faces, offers solutions during Laity Leadership address

By Para Drake \*

"Christianity is facing...its first perfect storm," Dr. Leonard Sweet observed as he directed his prophetic voice toward the laity of the Annual Conference. "God has chosen you to lead the church through Christianity's first perfect storm."

Sweet was the featured speaker for the Laity Leadership Event during Annual Conference.

Hardly a sound could be heard in the convention center when Sweet outlined the "problem" of the perfect storm – defined as the convergence of The Tsunami of Post-Modernity, the Hurricane of Post-Christendom, and the Global Warming of Post-Scale."

As he moved toward the "solution" of the outlined challenge to the Church, Sweet went over the results of a survey that found Christians in the Church to be mostly hypocritical and about equally judgmental and boring.

In a lively, visual message, Sweet leveled his aim at the traditional church's rejection of the technological feats of post-modernity, saying that John Wesley himself would pick up the Google-video as a way to impart God's grace to those outside the church's walls.

He challenged the conference to embrace the interface of "EPIC" and move into God's operating system

of "MRI."

This translates into being Experiential, Participatory, Image-rich, and Connective with church-life that is Missional, Relational, and Incarnational.

Sweet reminded the audience that lives were lost to bring the Word in the language of the common people through the technology of Gutenberg's printing press.

Today's technology, grounded in the type-writer understandable to baby boomers, is but a fleeting note in what is already in the works.

Between Gutenberg and Google, the Church rests in the storms of "post-dom"— post-modernity, post-christendom, and post-scale, Sweet said.

Continuing to discuss the "perfect storm," Sweet said the church should embrace the traditional form of the ark, or boat, and go deeper into the water.

He said the church should not be hugging the "safe" shore but going into the storm, discarding any excess baggage, and strapping people to the



Dr. Leonard Sweet, voted one of the 50 most influential Christians in America, served as featured speaker during the Friday evening Lay Leadership Event. (Photo by Bill Norton)

mast so storm winds would not blow anyone out of the boat.

## Where is Jesus?

"Where is Jesus in this perfect storm?" Sweet asked. "Jesus is pushing us from our past or he is pulling us into our future." God is in the storm and invites the Church to join God in the storm, he said.

The storm is not going away. "We can no longer have culture bend to

our Christian traditions —those days of set-aside sacred time on Sunday mornings have long past. The challenge of the Church today is the formation of 23rd century Christians: Our young people will be living into the next century. What kind of Christians are we forming for the future of the world or for the future of the church?" Sweet asked.

According to Sweet, God is "rebooting and defragmenting the Church," called "pruning" in biblical language, for the challenges the Church faces.

"People are hungry for relationship; neither Gutenberg nor Google offer the real relationship. Jesus offers the relationship people seek – and it's Jesus the Church should be lifting up, as the mast of the boat in the storm," Sweet said.

In this age of the perfect storm, Sweet said the Church is challenged to "go into the world" instead of trying to attract the world.

The Church is challenged to become relational, said Sweet, giving up the present "propositional" stance.

He said the Church is challenged to give up its colonial view in favor of an incarnational, or living, witness to the Gospel.

The Church is challenged to allow God to do "something big. Let go the fear of the storm, embrace this perfect storm that we live in, and follow God's lead in the storm. Let go of the past and enjoy the ride, trusting God to do what God always does," Sweet said.

\* Para Drake, a conference Elder, is pastor of Core Creek in the New Bern District and on the Communications Committee.

## Faithful witnesses *continued from page 5*

- "How do we live it out?"
- "Do we believe lives can be changed?"

During the ordination service, Gwinn called on the ordinands to remember they were called by God. "Never forget the why," Gwinn said. "It is, and it will remain, crucial.

Never forget it's about the calling from God."

Gwinn shared four "Kingdom rules" for ministry:

- Kingdom rule 1—"The way up is down." He urged the ordinands to commit themselves completely to Jesus' model of servanthood. "Hold absolutely nothing back as we lay hands on you tonight. Surrender as completely as you know how to surrender."
- Kingdom rule 2—"Fruit is the result of connection." He said it's tempting to work for God instead of working with God. But the call is always about loving God

and living a life that reflects that love. "It's about being and not just doing," Gwinn said. "When you were in your mother's womb God called you by name. He has plans for you. Don't disappoint him, don't fail him, by trying to do this in your own strength."

- Kingdom rule 3—"Lead by example." People follow sermons they see more than sermons they hear, Gwinn said. "People will know quickly whether you walk the walk or just talk the talk."
- Kingdom rule 4—"You can't stay where you are." He said the Spirit invoked in ordination is the same Spirit who was at work in Jesus, the apostles and the prophets.

"God is up to something really big," Gwinn said. "Do you believe that? Do not come to this altar tonight if you are not willing to expect great things from God and attempt great things for God. Pray like you've never prayed before."

\* Reggie Ponder, Jr., a conference Elder, is a reporter with the Henderson Daily Dispatch.

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# Retirees thank spouses, colleagues, and congregations during ministry celebration

By Reggie Ponder, Jr. \*

The Rev. Glenn Everett first heard God's call to ordained ministry as a 10-year-old.

More than two decades later, Everett answered, according to his own account in the sermon he preached for the 2008 retiree recognition service.

Everett described the Rev. Langill Watson as his boyhood hero. That first call to ordained ministry came under Watson's ministry. A second call came under the ministry of Bill Davenport during a Lay Witness Mission. Under the ministry of Walter Felton, Everett answered God's call in the affirmative.

He explained that part of his reluctance stemmed from a stuttering problem he had as a child. But stuttering has not been a problem for him in ministry.

"I have found out that God takes care of us," he said. God calls all people, Everett said, explaining his brother had discovered "God calls some people to be lay people."

Everett said he had come to know that God is in charge and that his people must trust him to work. He told of preaching his first sermon at Trinity UMC, after which he issued an altar call, and many answered. But later he was asked to lead a 10-minute devotional at camp, and it didn't go well — teaching him there's no magic formula and that effective preaching comes from God.

Recalling the time a stranger on the street in Burlington told him, "you look like a preacher," he called the greeting "a great compliment." He had special words for the new pastors.

"Don't lose sight of the call that God has put in your life," Everett said. "Make sure that you trust God more than your own feelings."

Everett told a story about a wildlife officer who was driving through the country when he noticed the strange sight of an eagle scratching with the chickens in a barnyard.

When the officer stopped and asked the farmer about the eagle, the farmer insisted it was a chicken.

Wanting to prove the bird was an eagle, the officer threw it into the air — only to watch it fall to the ground, wings flapping frantically. When he dropped the eagle from the top rung of a ladder, the bird once again crashed to the ground. The same thing



Front Row: Bill Switzer, Maryellen Phelan Switzer, Carolyn Cummings-Worax, Milton Gilbert, Lucretia Gilbert, Virgil (Butch) Huffman. 2nd Row: Coleen Doucette, Patricia Stewart, Emily Motley, Martha Edgerton, Betsy Simpson, Sharon Lee, Jim Lee, Diane Armistead, Barbara Smith, Glenn Everett. Back Row: Leonard Doucette, Ralph Stewart, Joe Motley, Glenn Edgerton, Bill Simpson, Roger Armistead, Charles Michael Smith, Clark Barfield. (Photo by Bill Norton)

happened when the officer dropped the eagle off the barn.

"The farmer said, 'I told you it was a chicken,'" Everett continued. Finally, the officer bought the eagle.

He dropped it from the top of a mountain, and it appeared the bird would strike the ground in the valley below — until the eagle caught the wind beneath its wings (not a moment too soon) and began to soar upward.

No matter what the world tells us, Everett concluded, "God has called us to be eagles, not chickens."

In videotaped statements, retirees thanked their spouses, colleagues and congregations. These are some of the comments:

- Roger Armistead said he's hopeful for the conference.
- Clark Barfield said he was grateful for the opportunity to serve.
- Carolyn Cummings-Worax noted she was the first female Native American clergy in the conference. She said she appreciated the support of the conference and her family.
- Martha Edgerton offered special thanks for members of Longview UMC, whom she described as "warm and supportive."
- Roger Elliott said it was hard to believe 40 years of ministry had come and gone. He recalled after he preached the homecoming service at his home church, his high school English teacher had told him, "Roger, God does work miracles, doesn't he?"
- Glenn Everett said he wanted to praise God for his mentors and all

who had helped him in ministry.

- Milton Gilbert said the laity had taught him how to be in ministry. He said he was "thinking outside the box" and planning to resume puppet ministry.
- Butch Huffman said he would continue to do mission work and help organize work teams.
- Jim Lee thanked Jesus for the opportunity to serve. He said he had "a heart overflowing with gratitude."
- Joe Motley thanked Kermit Braswell, a former administrative assistant to the bishop; all of his district superintendents; and his friends.

- Bill Simpson said he was excited about the opportunities ahead.
- Charles M. Smith showed photos from his family album and said he looks forward to teaching at Duke and working with the Divinity School on Duke Endowment initiatives. He described God as still powerfully at work in the church.
- Trish Stewart said she still feels young at heart and is looking forward to pursuing new interests. She quoted words from the hymn, "When In our Music God Is Glorified."
- Maryellen Switzer thanked members of the congregations she has served.

\* Reggie Ponder, Jr., a conference Elder, is a reporter with the Henderson Daily Dispatch.

(LEFT) At the close of the retirement service, Trish Stewart, a retiring Deacon, passed a sash to Jo Elaine Harris, a newly ordained Deacon. (Photo by Bill Norton)

(BELOW) A retiring Elder, Milton Gilbert, lit a candle and passed a stole to a newly ordained Elder, Thurman Horney, Jr., at the close of the service honoring retiring clergy (Bottom and for left photos by Reggie Ponder, Jr.)





# *Celebrating the 2008 Acts 2 Churches*

The first NC Conference churches to receive the Acts 2 designation were announced on June 13 during Annual Conference. As was defined in the 2006 State of the Church Address given by Bishop Al Gwinn, these churches were honored as congregations making a difference in passion for Christ and depth of service and witness to the community.

These congregations embody the fullness of the four key descriptors:

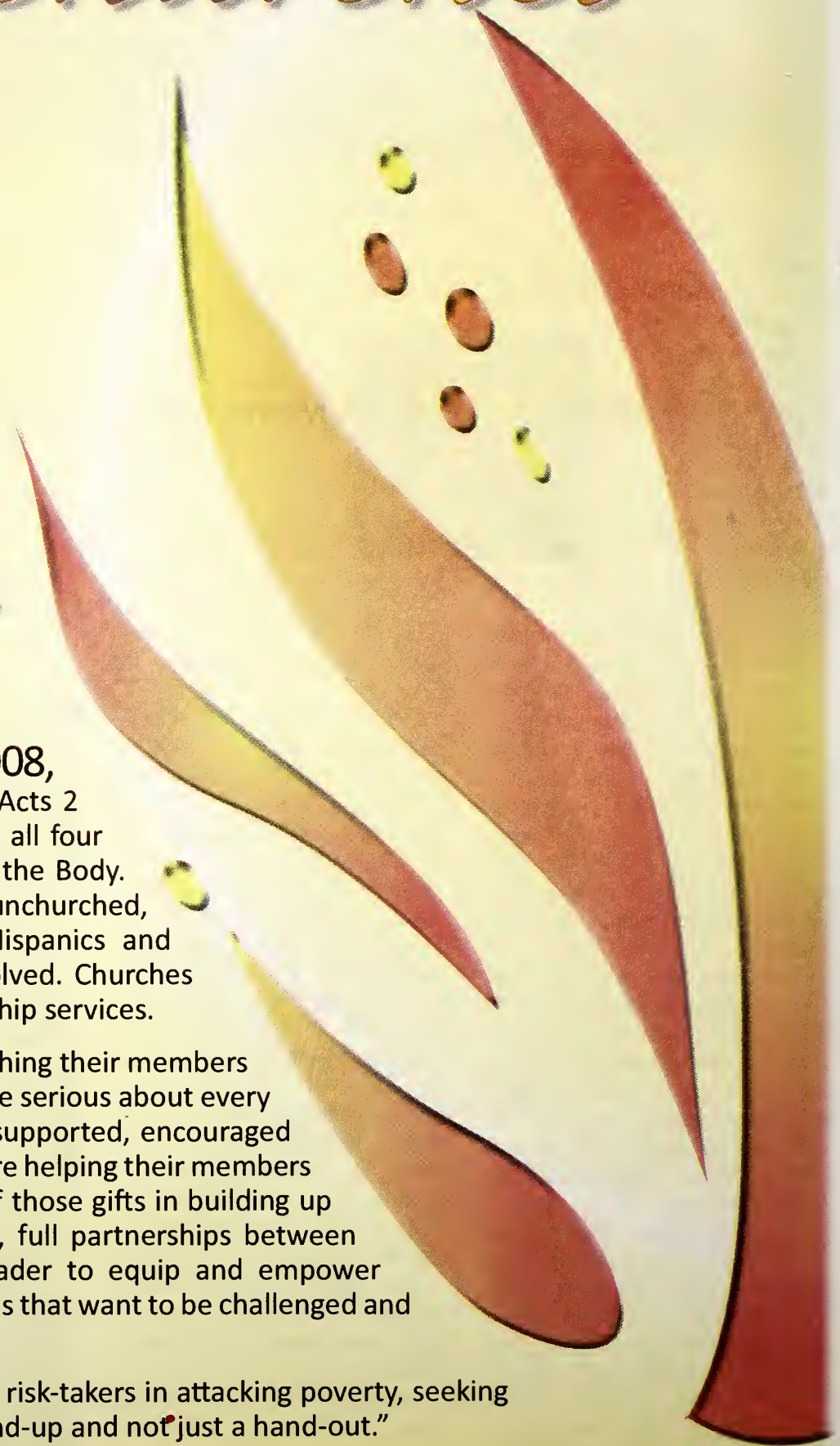
- ~ Radical Hospitality*
- ~ Passionate Worship*
- ~ Intentional  
Spiritual Formation*
- ~ Risk-Taking Mission  
and Ministry*

"...By the Annual Conference of 2008, I want us to be able to identify, by name, 200 Acts 2 Churches in this conference Churches that have all four of these qualities functioning well in the life of the Body. Churches that have decided to reach the lost, the unchurched, the de-churched—to reach children, youth, Hispanics and Latinos—not counting the cost or sacrifice involved. Churches that have prayer-based, Spirit-filled, quality worship services.

By 2008 we will name 200 churches that are teaching their members to go deeper and not just wider. Churches that are serious about every member being in small groups where they are supported, encouraged and challenged to grow in Christ. Churches that are helping their members understand the gifts of the Spirit and the role of those gifts in building up the Body of Christ. Churches that forge strong, full partnerships between the clergy and laity. Churches that want a leader to equip and empower them and not do their ministry for them. Churches that want to be challenged and not coddled.

In 2008 we want to name 200 churches that are risk-takers in attacking poverty, seeking justice, caring for the needy—eager to give a hand-up and not just a hand-out."

— Bishop Gwinn, State of the Church Address, Annual Conference 2006





*Burlington*

Carrboro  
Cedar Grove  
Christ  
Leasburg  
New Hope  
-Purley Charge  
Orange  
Union Grove  
University  
Walnut Grove

*Elizabeth City*

All God's Children  
Colington\*  
Duck\*  
Edenton\*  
Hertford\*  
First: Elizabeth City\*  
Mighty Wind  
Mount Olivet  
New Hope  
Ocracoke\*  
Pilmoor Memorial

*New Bern*

Ann Street  
Centenary  
Faith Harbor  
Harker's Island  
New Song  
Pine Valley  
Rhems  
Riverdale  
St. James: Newport  
St. Peter's  
Swansboro

*Rocky Mount*

Edgecombe Parish:  
Pinetops  
Temperance Hall  
First: Rocky Mount  
Jackson  
Macon\*  
Norlina\*  
West Nash\*  
Winstead

*Durham*

Asbury Temple  
Community  
-Epworth  
Grace / Ca-Vel  
Reconciliation

*Fayetteville*

Camp Ground  
Cornerstone\*  
Haymount  
Hay Street\*  
Solid Rock  
St. Matthews\*  
Union\*

*Raleigh*

All Saints'  
Apex  
Avent Ferry  
Benson Memorial  
Edenton Street  
Fairmont  
Horne Memorial\*  
First: Fuquay-Varina  
Fuquay-Varina  
Genesis  
Hayes Barton  
Highland  
Knightdale  
Layden Memorial\*  
Millbrook  
Saint Andrews\*  
Saint Francis  
St. Mark's  
Sunrise  
Wake Forest  
Wendell  
White Plains

*Sanford*

Doub's Chapel  
McQueen's Chapel-  
Mt. Olive-  
Union Grove  
Meroney  
Roseland  
Southern Pines  
Trinity: Troy\*

*Goldsboro*

Benson\*  
Faison  
Four Oaks\*  
Fremont  
Garris Chapel\*  
Jefferson  
La Grange\*  
Pine Forest\*  
St. Paul

*Wilmington*

Andrews Chapel  
Bethlehem  
Camp  
Concord\*  
Lebanon\*  
Ocean View  
Oleander  
Seaside  
Sharon  
Maco: Shiloh\*  
Trinity: Wilmington  
Trinity: Southport  
Village Point  
Wesley Memorial  
Wesleyan Chapel  
Whiteville  
Windsor  
Wrightsville  
Zion\*

*Greenville*

Covenant  
Jarvis Memorial  
Salem  
St. James: Greenville  
St. James: Tarboro  
Trinity

*Rockingham*

Beauty Spot  
First: Laurinburg  
Gibson  
Jerusalem  
St. John  
Saint Luke  
St. Pauls  
Saint Peter: Hamlet  
Trinity: Fairmont

\* Due to an error in compiling the information to recognize Acts 2 Churches at Annual Conference, several names were not included. Certificates have been awarded to all Acts 2 designated churches.



# Witherington leads Annual Conference Bible study, uses Gospel of John to teach about Christian conversion

By Reggie Ponder, Jr. \*

Dr. Ben Witherington, III delved into the dynamics of Christian conversion during the morning Bible study sessions on the Thursday and Friday of Annual Conference.

## Jesus & Nicodemus (John 3)

Witherington, a professor at Asbury Theological Seminary, began Thursday's Bible study with a promise to peer into the depths of the Gospel of John, examining four passages in context.

"We tend to sound-bite the Word of God," he said, arguing for the importance of context.

He discussed Nicodemus' visit with Jesus as the background to the well-known verse in John 3:16. "John 3:16 is a text we have been so inoculated with it keeps us from getting the real thing," he said. He said that John has simple terminology with profound meaning:

- "Light" is revelation;
- "Life" is salvation;
- "Darkness" is antagonism toward light (evil, wickedness).

Jesus tells Nicodemus about a birth from above or second birth. (The Greek word can mean either "from above" or "again.") "In the Gospel of John we have a discussion on two levels," he said.

Acknowledging the complex nature of the Gospel of John, Witherington said it was important to challenge people with the full message because the world needs the meat of the Gospel. "It is not your job to dumb down the message," he said.

The phrase "born of water" in John 3 does not refer to Christian Baptism, he said. Rather, the passage contrasts physical birth (born of water) and spiritual birth (born of the Spirit). "That's what this text is about — it's about salvation by grace through faith," he said.

Witherington said "world" in John 3:16 is *kosmos*—"humanity, fallen and organized against God." It's such fallen humanity that God loves, he said.

The passage teaches "the necessity of Jesus for salvation," Witherington said. "Jesus Christ is the necessary and sufficient means for the salvation of the whole world. That is the good news — the heart of the Gospel."

## Jesus & the Samaritan Woman (John 4)

"You know, conversion is a strange thing," Witherington said, explaining it can be joyful, sad, slow, fast, dramatic, quiet. What matters, he said, is have you been born again? Do you love Jesus with all you have?

He said the Jews and Samaritans



Ben Witherington delivered a sermon as part of the Advance celebration (see pg. 1). He also led Bible study sessions during Annual Conference. (Photo by Bill Norton)

in Jesus' day were like the Israelis and Palestinians today.

"Jesus was a breaker-down of the barriers to reach people with the message of the Good News," he said. The account in John 4 demonstrates that because Jesus met with an immoral Samaritan woman.

The two levels of discourse are evident in the Samaritan woman's misunderstanding of the meaning of living water, he said.

When Jesus talks to the woman about living with a man who is not her husband, she "changes the subject from ethics to theology," Witherington pointed out — noting it's typical that we change the subject when Jesus touches us in a personal place.

But in the end it was the woman, not Jesus' own disciples, who gathered the Samaritans to learn more about Jesus, he said.

After the Bible study, Bishop Al Gwinn asked those gathered to discuss in small groups the barriers they and their congregations needed to be breaking down in the community.

## Healing of the Man Born Blind (John 9)

The Bible study on Friday morning began with an exploration of Jesus' healing of the man born blind.

"Some people think they have a relationship with God that's kind of like a reciprocity relationship," Witherington said. He told the group that the account of the healing shows the sufficiency of Jesus and the inadequacy of the reciprocity theology.

Noting the story is "told in loving detail," he described it as a powerful story of someone in darkness who is brought into the light through a close encounter with Jesus Christ.

He called it "a powerful story about ships passing in the night" because

the Jewish authorities are slipping into darkness as the man born blind moves into the Light.

Mentioning the two levels of discourse in John, he said it's a story about both physical blindness and spiritual blindness: "If you've got spiritual blindness, you need divine intervention."

In early Judaism, some rabbis said when someone could give sight to someone born blind, they would know the Messiah had come, he explained.

Witherington said seeing is not believing, but believing leads to seeing. Jesus makes seeing possible. "He doesn't merely bring the light, he is the Light in this story," Witherington said. "He is the Light of the world."

The man born blind grows in insight. "He's going further into the light but the Jewish authorities are going in the opposite direction—further into the darkness," he said.

He pointed out that after the man born blind has been expelled from the synagogue, "he doesn't seek and find Jesus—Jesus seeks and finds him."

## Empty Tomb Narrative (John 20)

Witherington closed his Bible study with a look at Mary Magdalene's encounter with the Risen Jesus in John 20. He addressed the contro-

versial theory that Jesus and Mary Magdalene might have been married.

"She's not Mrs. Jesus," he said, pointing out she calls him "rabboni," a term women in ancient Israel didn't call their husbands.

"This story is too improbable not to be true," explaining no one in a patriarchal culture — "think Taliban" — would have invented a story in which the Risen Jesus appeared first to a woman. "He graced a woman with his first appearance from the tomb, Witherington said.

The first person commissioned with the message of the resurrection is a woman, he said, and "if it's good enough for Jesus it ought to be good enough for us."

Christians owe the heart of the credo to the testimony of women, he said. Mary Magdalene wasn't impressed by her meeting with the angels, "God's Fed-Ex boys." He said, "When she encounters Jesus is when the change comes. It's only Jesus that gets her out of her funk."

He stressed the reality of the Resurrected Christ. "The text doesn't say she saw Jesus," he said. "The text says he appeared to her. He appeared in the flesh and blood. Only a Risen Lord could jump-start the church."

Ancient people didn't believe in conversion, he said. They believed people couldn't change. "They can't — without the miraculous grace of Jesus Christ," he said.

\* Reggie Ponder, Jr., a conference Elder, is a reporter with the Henderson Daily Dispatch.



Annual Conference members discussed in small groups the barriers they and their congregations need to break down in their communities. (Photos by Bill Norton)





# Bishop Alfred Wesley Gwinn, Jr. announces pastoral appointment changes for 2008-09

By LeeAnne Thornton \*

Bishop Alfred Wesley Gwinn, Jr, resident bishop of the Raleigh area, announced the appointments of approximately 900 clergy members of the North Carolina Conference on June 17. A total of 150 changes were made for the year. A list of all appointments, new and continuing, is available on the Conference Web site, [www.nccumc.org/AC2008/appts2008\\_2009.pdf](http://www.nccumc.org/AC2008/appts2008_2009.pdf). Clergy are appointed for one year and can be reappointed to the same location or be reassigned by the bishop.

## District Superintendent assignment changes

A district superintendent has the responsibility of supervising pastors in a specific geographic area.

The Rev. Carol Goehring, presently the Fayetteville district superintendent, has been appointed executive director of the Conference Connectional Ministries.

The Rev. Sam Wynn, pastor at Hollands UMC in Raleigh, has been appointed Fayetteville district superintendent. (Bishop Gwinn later announced that Wynn would be on Family Leave for 60 days, and the Rev. Milton Gilbert would serve as interim superintendent in the Fayetteville District.)

The Rev. R. Carl Frazier, Jr. currently pastor at St. Luke UMC in Sanford, has been appointed the Elizabeth City district superintendent.

The Rev. Samuel D. McMillan III, pastor of First UMC in Laurinburg, has been appointed as district superintendent to the Rocky Mount district.

The Rev. Timothy J. Russell will become the Raleigh district superintendent, moving from the Wilmington district superintendent position.

The Rev. Stephen C. Compton, currently the conference director of Congregational Development, was appointed the Sanford District Superintendent.

The Rev. E. Powell Osteen, Jr., currently the pastor at Garber UMC in New Bern, has been appointed as the Wilmington District Superintendent.

## Pastoral assignment changes

Following are other pastoral changes as announced by Bishop Gwinn:

### BURLINGTON DISTRICT

Alamance, Caswell, and Orange counties

The Rev. William H. Gattis, district superintendent

Front Street associate, Benjamin D. Alexander; Grace, Ronnie R. Byrd; Carrboro, Claire Clyburn McKeown from Pittsboro: First; Chapel Hill: Amity, Harriett Tuck Bounds from Sarecta-Wesley Chapel; Ridge-Garden Charge, Sang Park from Perquimans; Leasburg, Steven M. Hall; Saxapahaw, David J. Harriss from Lillington; Shady Grove, Gilbert C. Butler III, student pastor.

### DURHAM DISTRICT

Durham, Granville, Person, and Vance counties

The Rev. H. Gray Southern, district superintendent

Bahama: Mt. Bethel, Bryan Siefert from another conference; Banks, Clifford Wall, student pastor; Durham: Aldersgate assistant, Nathan Arledge; Durham: Asbury, Martha McLean; Durham: Bethesda, Susan H. White; Durham: Cristo Vive, Alfonso Piacentini, student pastor; Durham: Duke Memorial co-pastor, Lee Roger Owens from Trinity (Franklin Co.) co-pastor; Durham: Duke Memorial co-pastor, Ginger Thomas from Trinity (Franklin Co.) co-pastor; Durham: Lakewood Mission, Patrice Cheasty Miller; Durham: Resurrection, Robert Wesley Simpson from Front Street associate; Durham: Fletcher's Chapel assistant, Darren Hickerson; Henderson: City Road, Daniel R. Baer, Jr.; Henderson: White Memorial, Michael Hugh Smith; Mt. Tirzah, Dustin Sprouse from Creswell: Mt. Hermon; Oak Grove, Diane LeBlanc; RTP new church start, Kenneth McLean from Oak Grove.

### ELIZABETH CITY DISTRICT

Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Hertford, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Tyrrell, and Washington counties

The Rev. R. Carl Frazier, Jr., district superintendent

Ahoskie, Harvey Lee Edwards from Chatham-Cedar Grove; Creswell: Mt. Hermon, Dalma Cribb from Caledonia; Edenton associate, Susanna Fitch-Slater from St. John; Hertford, Gayla Estes Collins from Wake Forest; Kitty Hawk, Curtis Campbell from Scotts Hill: Wesleyan Chapel; McBride, Wade Bennett; Newbegun, Roger Braun from another conference; Perkins, Mary Trail, retired supply; Perquimans, Ray Tavenner from Perkins; Plymouth, Jay Clark, retired supply; Shiloh (Stumpy Point), Glenn Everett, retired supply; South Mills, K. Carl Singley, retired supply; St. John, Roger Dill, retired supply.

### FAYETTEVILLE DISTRICT

Cumberland, Harnett, Hoke, and Sampson counties

The Rev. Samuel Wynn, district superintendent

(The Rev. Milton Gilbert, interim district superintendent for 60 days)

Black's Chapel, Michael Sadtler; Clinton: Trinity, Don Matthis, interim supply; Coats, Terry Hunt from Circle of Christ; Cool Springs, Raymon Atkins; Cumberland, Ron Gurganus from Elevation; Erwin-Parkers Grove, Jimmie Ray Tatum from Lumberton: Chestnut Street; Fayetteville: Christ, Franklin D. Daniels, retired supply; Fayetteville: Culbreth Memorial, Gregory McGarvey, from appointment in another conference; Fayetteville: Hay Street, David Harvin from Goldsboro: St. Luke; Fayetteville: Trinity, Garry McCaffery from Fayetteville: Culbreth Memorial; Harnett: Cokesbury, Joseph Dewitte from Henderson: White Memorial; Lillington: J. Thomas Smith, retired supply; Mamers, Roger Armistead, retired supply; Marvin, Roderic Mullen from Roseboro; Spring Hill, Terry Williams from Plymouth.

### GOLDSBORO DISTRICT

Duplin, Johnston, Lenoir, Wayne, and Wilson counties

The Rev. Charles M. Cook, district superintendent

Brownings-Smith Chapel, Leland Heath, Jr. from Shady Grove/Dover; Elevation, Bobby Tyson, Sr., retired supply; Goldsboro: Daniels Memorial, John H. Dutton, Jr., from Ahoskie; Goldsboro: St. Luke, Adam Seate from Fayetteville: Trinity; Johnston County Mission (new church), Gail I. Myers from Durham: Lakewood; Sarecta-Wesley Chapel, Elizabeth Gaines; Selma: Edgerton, Hal Harbin, Jr., from Halifax; Smithfield: Centenary, David J. Beck from Hertford; West Clayton (new church), David Wehrle from another conference.

### GREENVILLE DISTRICT

Beaufort, Craven, Edgecombe, Greene, Hyde, Lenoir, Martin, and Pitt counties

The Rev. Elizabeth Hackney Hood, district superintendent

Aurora-Hobucken, Timothy Ware; Bethany, Sue Barnes Farlow; Campbell's Creek, Sylvia K. Duke; Grifton, Linda H. Rowe from Bethany; Hookerton, Claude Nethercutt from Aurora; Lane's Chapel-Bethany, W. David Harrington from family leave; Washington Circuit, Gary Murphree from Bath.

### NEW BERN DISTRICT

Carteret, Craven, Jones, Onslow, and Pamlico counties

The Rev. Dennis M. Goodwin, district superintendent

Belgrade-Tabernacle, Bryan Lassiter, interim supply; Core Creek, Para R. Drake from Newbegun; Cypress Creek, Roy Rodgers; Harlowe-Oak Grove, Karen C. Howell from Scotts Hill: Wesleyan Chapel associate; Haw Branch, Curtis Hildt, interim supply; Jacksonville: Pine Valley associate, Jose Mora; Lee Chapel, Eric Marshburn; Marshallburg-Smyrna, Richard Bryant from missionary appointment; MC: Franklin Memorial, David Jones; NB: Centenary minister of discipleship, Elizabeth G. Taylor from another denomination; NB: Faith, James Tosto from South Mills; NB: Garber, John Check from Kitty Hawk; Pollocksville, Martha Lewis; Shady Grove-Dover, Carolyn Roy from Belgrade-Tabernacle; Snead's Ferry: First, Keith A. Miller from Spring Hill; Swansboro, John H. Tyson from Hay Street.

### RALEIGH DISTRICT

Franklin, Johnston, and Wake counties

The Rev. Timothy Russell, district superintendent

Apex Community and Latino minister, José Luis Villaseñor; Acts, Timothy Davis Catlett; Cary: Genesis, William Craig Ham from Marvin; Cary: Genesis associate, Rochele Bailey-George; Cary: Macedonia, Thomas Supplee from RR: First; Ebenezer-Wesley, Carolyn Burrus; Franklinton, Daniel Gene Jenks from Zion; Hollands, Gary Edmund Allred from Raleigh: Soapstone; Hollands associate, John Michael McAllister; Raleigh: All Saints associate, Laura Fine Ledford; Raleigh: Edenton Street, Edward F. Hill II from Raleigh district superintendent; Raleigh: Highland, David J. Goehring from Southern Pines; Raleigh: Longview, Margaret W. Long, retired supply; Raleigh: Soapstone, Karen H. Whitaker from Cary: Genesis; Raleigh: Wesley Memorial, Dennis C. Peay from Acts; Raleigh: Windborne, Elizabeth R. Roberts from Seaside associate; Trinity (Franklin Co.) Kellie Gallagher-Smith from Bailey charge associate; Wake Forest, W. Donald Warren from Elizabethtown: Trinity; Wakefield associate, Judith Mann New from Franklinton; Wendell associate, Stan Gallagher-Smith from Elm City.



# Pastoral appointment changes *continued from page 13*

## ROCKINGHAM DISTRICT

Richmond, Robeson, and Scotland counties

The Rev. Leonard E. Fairley, district superintendent

Bethesda, Brian D. Perry from Rowland; Caledonia, Patricia H. Stone, retired supply; Laurinburg: St. Luke, Joseph A. Winston III from Brownings-Smith Chapel; Lumberton: Chestnut Street, Stephen N. Little from Erwin-Parkers Grove; Rockingham: Beaver Dam, Gregory Minnick from Mt. Tirzah; Rockingham: Roberdell, Gregory Minnick from Mt. Tirzah; Rowland, Don Lee Harris, retired supply.

## ROCKY MOUNT DISTRICT

Edgecombe, Halifax, Nash, Northampton, Warren, and Wilson counties

The Rev. Samuel D. McMillan III, district superintendent

Elm City, Laura A. Dunlap, from Englewood associate; Halifax, Steven N. Formo from Jamesville-Siloam; Hollister, Carleton McKita, retired supply; Hornes-Sims, David E. Heath from Mamers; Macon, Betty Willis; RR: First, Charles B. Owens from Harbor; RR: Rosemary, James D. Bell from Durham: Duke Memorial; Zion, Charles L. Herrin from Bethesda.

## SANFORD DISTRICT

Chatham, Lee, Montgomery, and Moore counties

The Rev. Stephen C. Compton, district superintendent

Asbury, Donald E. Burns, Jr. from Sandhills Circuit; Bethlehem-Cumnock,

## SANFORD DISTRICT *continued*

Richard Tysinger from Raleigh:

Wesley Memorial; Bynum, Jeff Babajtis, student pastor; Carbonton, Ira H. Smith, retired supply; Chatham-Cedar Grove, Patricia Sykes from Sanford: Jonesboro associate; Macedonia, Ron Scott; Pittsboro: First, Jan N. Hill from Harlowe-Oak Grove; Sandhills Circuit, Myron and Barbara Dice; Sanford: St. Luke, Robert D. O'Keef from Fayetteville; Cumberland; Silk Hope, Brian Wellborn, student pastor; Southern Pines, Thomas L. Sweeley from RR: Rosemary; West End: Won Namkoong from Elizabeth City district superintendent.

## WILMINGTON DISTRICT

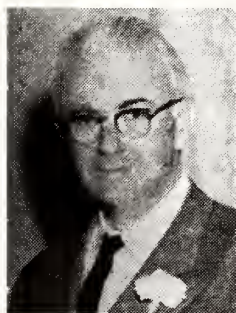
Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, New Hanover, and Pender counties

The Rev. E. Powell Osteen, Jr., district superintendent

Bolton charge, Charles C. Smith, Jr.; Elizabethtown: Trinity, F. Bruce Allen from West End; Hallsboro, B. Elaine Swett from Chestnut Ridge; Maco: Shiloh, Leonard Sheppard from Kelly: Trinity; Mishop Springs, Willie F. Allen from Hallsboro; Scotts Hill: Wesleyan Chapel co-pastor, David Woodhouse from Carrboro; Scotts Hill: Wesleyan Chapel co-pastor, Andrea Woodhouse from family leave; Seaside associate, Ellen McCubbin; Westview, Gertrude N. Wilder from Peace; Wilmington: Harbor, Donald R. Shields from Macedonia; Oleander-Devon Park associate, James Bliss; Wilmington: Wesley Memorial associate, William Fraser Adams.

*\* LeeAnne Thornton is on the NCC Christian Advocate staff and is administrative assistant in communications.*

## 101st birthday celebration to honor Key Taylor



The Rev. Key Taylor

For 32 years, Key Taylor put the needs of rural churches first and foremost, according to a memorial statement about him in the 1975 *Conference Journal*. His ministry was in rural churches and for most of his ministry he served on minimum salary.

On July 30, a celebration of the life and work of the Rev. Key Taylor will be held at Wesley UMC, 2979 Wesley Church Road, Farmville. The gathering begins at 9 am and marks what would have been his 101st birthday. Much of the celebration will be devoted to sharing stories about Key Taylor who was a mentor and friend to many conference clergy, including Vernon Tyson.

In 1958, the Rural Church Fund was established, and the Key Taylor Award was born. The fund reached a level that distributions could begin in 1989 to honor rural churches in the conference for their work in mission and growth in ministry.

Key Taylor chaired the NC Conference Commission on Town and Country Work for 16 years and was in the forefront of the establishment of new churches and two colleges during the "Garber Era." He also "sparked a campaign that netted \$50,000 to establish the J.M. Ormond Fund" at Duke Divinity School.

"In life Key Taylor gave all he had to Christ and His church. In death he gave all that remained—even his body—to be a continuing blessing to his fellow man. The greatest gift he left behind was his magnetic, contagious spirit," says the 1975 *Journal*.

The celebration is open to all who would like to honor and remember Taylor. For information call Vernon Tyson, 919-832-7176 or Conrad Mazingo, a Wesley Church member, 252-753-2700.

## Building project needs assessment begins

The needs assessment phase of the conference building project began following approval by the 2008 Annual Conference of a proposal from the Conference Board of Trustees to sell the existing United Methodist Building and build a new building in Greenfield Park in Garner.

Comments and ideas for things that should

be included in the new conference headquarters are being requested. Lessons learned from other building projects are welcome.

Ideas and best advice should be sent to the building project team at [nccbuilds@nccumc.org](mailto:nccbuilds@nccumc.org). Suggested ideas and advice will be compiled and considered during the assessment phase.

## Conference Trustees announce new insurance coverage guidelines

The Conference Board of Trustees, during their report to the Annual Conference, announced guidelines for property and casualty coverage types and limits for local churches.

### New guidelines

The new coverage recommendations are:

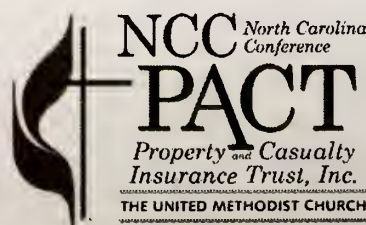
- Building and business personal property insurance at full replacement cost,
- General liability coverage at \$1,000,000,
- Physical abuse and sexual misconduct liability coverage at \$1,000,000,
- Pastoral professional liability coverage at \$1,000,000,
- Employee dishonesty and crime coverage at levels adequate to cover assets held by the church – each church needs to evaluate this coverage independently,
- Directors and Officers liability coverage at \$1,000,000,
- Umbrella policy coverage at \$1,000,000, and
- Workers' Compensation coverage at \$1,000,000 for all employees whether or not the church meets the minimum requirements under state law.

All of these types and levels may not be available to all churches with existing carriers but conference trustees have worked to ensure the coverage is available to all churches under the North Carolina Conference Property and Casualty Insurance Trust, Inc. (NCC PACT) non-profit insurance agency.

The trustees also announced a partnership between the NC Conference and The Duke Endowment to provide funding for all local churches to cover the capitalization fee for joining NCC PACT so that all recommended levels of coverage are available.

The capitalization fee is a one-time fee assessed to cover the reserve requirements of the insurance trust and would equate to 20% of premium. The funds for this fee are available for local churches as a grant through the Conference and Duke Endowment partnership.

Information on the NCC PACT property and casualty insurance package can be found on the Treasurer's Office web site at [www.nccumc.org/treasurer](http://www.nccumc.org/treasurer). Churches can also email questions to [nccpact@nccumc.org](mailto:nccpact@nccumc.org) or call Chrisy Powell, NCC PACT Program Administrator, at 800-849-4433.





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**Upcoming events  
throughout the Conference**

## Retreat focuses on sustainable agriculture as a faith practice

An upcoming Creation Care Retreat (July 25-27) will focus on sustainable agriculture as a practice of faith will be held at Chestnut Ridge Camp & Retreat Center. Retreat leaders for these hands-on experiences include Fred Bahnson from Anathoth Garden and Rich Church from Winfield Farm as well as year-round staff at Chestnut Ridge. Don Richter from the Valparaiso Project will preach. Local musicians will provide entertainment on Saturday evenings. The retreat is open to all interested persons. Registration details and more information are available at: [www.campchestnutridge.org](http://www.campchestnutridge.org).

## School of Christian Mission

The UMW School of Christian Mission will be held July 23-26 at Methodist University in Fayetteville. Three courses are offered: Thursday - Israel and Palestine; Friday - Native Americans: Giving our Hearts Away; and Friday/Saturday - I Believe in Jesus. Participants can attend the school for any combination of courses/days. Membership in UMW is not required. Overnight accommodations are available in the Creekside Apartments on campus.

The Israel and Palestine study is a repeat from 2007. The study leaders are Sandra Croom, Shirley Way and Harriet Binkley. The study book is *Israel and Palestine* by Steve Goldstein with a study guide by Sandra Olewine.

The leaders for the Native American study are Dr. Ruth D. Woods, the Rev. Sylvia Collins-Ball and Steve Taylor. The course study book is *Giving Our Hearts Away: Native American Survival* by Thom White Wolf Fassett with a study guide by Brenda Connelly.

There are three opportunities to participate in the I Believe in Jesus study. Two split classes will begin Friday night from 6-9pm and finish Saturday morning from 8:15am-12 noon. The third class will be led by the Rev. Charlene Pierce Guider on Saturday. The study book is *I Believe in Jesus* by Bishop Minerva Carcaño with a study guide by Glory Dharmaraj.

All of the study books will be available for purchase at the School of Christian Mission. CEU credits are available.

The registration form is available at <http://www.nccumc.org/docs/events/schl.pdf>. For questions, contact Theresa Hodges, dean of the School of Christian Mission, at [theresa.millsint@embarqmail.com](mailto:theresa.millsint@embarqmail.com).

## Applications available online for Youth Ministry Award

The Award of Excellence in Youth Ministry is presented at Pilgrimage each year. The application deadline is Aug. 31. The application is available at <http://www.nccumc.org/youthministry/awardexcellence.application.pdf>.

## Youth groups at Pilgrimage

Youth groups and individuals contribute to leadership at Pilgrimage in a variety of ways. The deadline to sign up for any of these opportunities is Aug. 31.

Individual youth may apply to be considered for the house band (auditions will be required and an audition date scheduled for early fall). To obtain the house band application, please request it via email to [senicholson@nccumc.org](mailto:senicholson@nccumc.org).

Youth groups may offer an act of worship during the sessions. Details about what act of worship would be offered should be emailed to [senicholson@nccumc.org](mailto:senicholson@nccumc.org). Groups may create a video of their group interpreting the Pilgrimage theme "Pass it On" and submit that to Youth Ministry, PO Box 10955, Raleigh, NC 27605. Youth groups may also create a portion of the stage visuals - any youth groups desiring to be part of this project should contact Sue Ellen Nicholson at the Methodist Building as soon as possible for details.

## Let the Children Come...

A resource event for adults in leadership of local church children's ministry will be held Saturday, Aug. 23 at Page Memorial UMC in Aberdeen from 9:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Pre-registration is not required, and there is no cost for the event. Four workshops will be offered on curriculum, use of the One Room resource, missions, and families in partnership with the church for children's faith development.

More information about this workshop is available at [www.nccumc.org/childrmin/children05.htm](http://www.nccumc.org/childrmin/children05.htm).

## Cyberspace, cyberministry and cybersafety workshops

The Conference Safe Sanctuaries and Sexual Ethics Committees are offering workshops on cyberministry and cybersafety for pastors, church staff, age-level ministry leaders, local church webmasters, etc. The cost is \$5 per person, and registrations must be sent in at least 10 days prior to the event. A registration brochure and other information will be available online at [nccumc.org](http://nccumc.org).

Each workshop will be on a Saturday morning, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Sept. 6- Haymount UMC-Fayetteville; Sept. 20-White Plains UMC-Cary; Sept. 27-Wesley Memorial UMC-Wilmington; and Nov. 15- Edenton UMC-Edenton.

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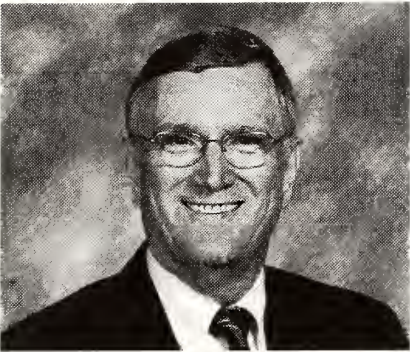
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By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

August 3, 2008  
Text: James 1:17-27  
“Doers of the Word”

Every Sunday, when I was in grades four, five, and six, I'd climb to the second floor of the educational building at First Methodist Church in Siler City.

There, in an opening assembly for the Junior Department, Paul Braxton, Janice Truelove, Pete Durham, Betty Jean Craven, I, and all the others burgeoning believers would quote the Department motto: “Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only” (King James Version, James 1:17).

This weekly exposure to the epistle of James helped in two ways: (1) It gave us something to say when Baptist friends accused the Methodists of not knowing any Bible, and (2) it planted in our hearts the truth that God measures faithful discipleship by

faithful doing.

But take a note. The text does not invite us to forget about listening to the Word. The admonition of James is that our actions are to be based on the Word we have heard.

Not just any old action will do; God looks for action that grows out of exposure to the Word.

It is similar to what Jesus said in Matthew 7:24: “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.”

James 1:22 says we deceive ourselves if we think hearing is enough (without doing). Revelation 12:9 calls the devil “the deceiver of the whole world.” Could it be that we can become the instruments of the devil’s work when we do the work of deceiving?

If I fool myself into thinking God’s Word says one thing when, in truth, it says something else, I am deceived (dare we say “of the devil?”).

If I fool myself into thinking that just knowing what God’s Word says is enough (without acting on

it), I deceive myself (dare we say “of the devil?”).

This verse (1:17) is meddlesome enough without James’ getting so specific He illustrates what “doing the Word” is like: a tongue under control (1:26), help for the helpless (1:27), and purity of life (1:27). I might have learned the verse in the Junior Department, but I’m still working on getting it right.

**What Someone Else Has Said:**

Kenneth Collins (*The Scripture Way of Salvation*, Abingdon) wrote, “Wesley’s understanding of merit in the loose sense, then, does not underscore autonomous human achievement; on the contrary, it doubly highlights the graciousness of divine activity: once in the giving of grace; the other in the rewarding of its fruit.”

**Prayer:**

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: “Help me listen Help me do Come with sufficient grace for both, O Lord...”

Sunday of September?

Ken Callahan has consulted with thousands of churches. He once noted that every single one of those churches claimed it was a friendly church. He adds, “Each church probably was friendly because everyone who had not found it friendly had already left” Oops

One of the great stories of our United Methodist heritage is how the erudite, scholarly, and formal Philip William Otterbein met with the simple, untrained, and unconfident Martin Boehm and said, *Wir sind Brüder* “We are brethren.” Out of that spirit came the United Brethren Church, part of the roots of United Methodism. Sometimes we get it right.

**What Someone Else Has Said:**

Peter DeVries begins his novel *The Prick of Noon* (Penguin Books) with these words: “The trouble with treating people as equals is that the first thing you know they may be doing the same thing to you.”

**Prayer:**

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: “God, Who has made all people of one blood, we confess our willingness, even eagerness, to choose up sides. Grant us a vision of our common life that is richer than life broken apart by the boundaries we create...”

August 10, 2008  
Text: James 2:1-13  
“Impartial Disciples”

Sometimes I get the feeling that the writer of the epistle of James has been visiting some of our churches. He seems to know a lot about us

In this week’s study text, James is observing how some folks get a richer welcome to church than others (2:2-4). Perhaps we do not mean to do it, but most of us are in congregations in which most everyone else is more or less like us.

Our congregations often show little racial, economic, or generational variety. Congregation A is largely White. Congregation B is largely Black. Congregation C has people who hire and fire employees. Congregation D has employees who get hired or fired. Congregation E shows little welcome to those who value old traditions. Congregation F shows little welcome to those who want to try new ventures.

The Scriptures call us to something different: equal welcomes. “But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law of transgressors” (James 2:9). That’s strong talk.

One way to approach this concern is to reflect on last Sunday. Many congregations had Holy Communion on the first Sunday of the month. Ask yourself: Who was missing from the Table last week? Why were they not there? What would have to happen for them to be present on the first

August 17, 2008  
Text: James 3:1-10, 13-18  
“Wise Speakers”

The other day I was shocked when I heard one of my friends use a vulgarity. My ears are not so pure that I have never heard this kind of language before, but I never expected it from this person. She usually speaks with absolute purity and appropriateness.

I was reminded that for most of us, just below the surface there is a vocabulary—shall I say “an attitude”—that we usually keep under wraps, under control. James says we should not be blessing and cursing from the same mouth (James 3:10).

This caution is about how we talk, but I think James has unearthed a human dimension that is deeper than just language.

What if our actions do not match our speaking? What if we show both gentleness and abuse? What if we are both peaceable and bellicose? What if we are both selfish and generous?

What if we are both pure and

See “Bible study,” page 18

conference  
CALENDAR

July	August
7 Durham District Set-up Meeting, Long Memorial UMC, 10am	1 UMW Conference Standing Rules Committee at School of Christian Mission; 12pm
8 Elizabeth City District Set-up Meeting, Edenton UMC, 6pm	3-6 SEJ UMACBA; Lake Junaluska
12-19 Appalachian Trail Hike	7 Sanford District Set-up meeting, Carthage UMC 10am-1pm
14-18 Raleigh District Creative Arts Camp; First UMC; Cary	11 New Bern District Set-up meeting, Ann Street UMC 10am-noon
14 Burlington District Set-up meeting, 9am - noon, Orange UMC	16 Wilmington District Set-up meeting, Trinity Family Life Ctr, 10am
16-19 Jurisdictional Conference; Lake Junaluska	UMW Finance Committee Meeting; 10am; Newton Grove UMC
21-26 ACS Annual Conference Session for Youth; Methodist University; Fayetteville	23 “Let the Children Come” children’s ministry workshop; Page Memorial, Aberdeen, 9:45am-12:15pm
23-26 UMW School of Christian Mission; Methodist University; Fayetteville	
30 Greenville District Set-up meeting, ECU Wesley Foundation 10am-2pm	

For information on upcoming NC Conference events, visit the conference web site at [www.nccumc.org](http://www.nccumc.org) and click on “Calendar” at the top of the page.



## Aug. 8-10 is NC Conference UMM Men's Spiritual Rally



General John Handy, a Methodist University graduate and retired Commander of the US Transportation Command and the U.S. Air Military Command, will be one of the featured speakers at the UMM Spiritual Rally. Scott Bass, a licensed marriage and family therapist will also speak.

The North Carolina Conference UMM Spiritual Rally will be Aug. 8-10 at Methodist University.

Leaders for the event, hosted by the Raleigh District UMM, will be Scott Bass, a licensed marriage and family therapist from the Nazareth House in Raleigh and General John Handy, retired Commander of the US Transportation Command and the U.S. Air Military Command. General Handy graduated from Methodist College. The Rev Gary Allred will give a Spirit talk.

Lodging will be at Creekside efficiency apartments at a special rate which will include meals.

Those enjoying golf are welcomed to visit Kings Grant Country Club at 10 a.m. on Aug. 8 for a round of golf at a special rate.

Get more information on costs and registration by calling Bill Shuler at 919-607-0583 or e-mail [williamshuler@sprintmail.com](mailto:williamshuler@sprintmail.com).

## NCWC offers senior citizens tuition-free classes this fall

Senior citizens age 60 and above will be able to take courses at North Carolina Wesleyan College tuition-free when the College begins its new Silver Scholars Program in the fall.

"This exciting new program will allow senior citizens to enroll with audit status on a non-degree, space-available basis in any course that Wesleyan offers," said Dr. John Thornell, vice president of academic affairs and dean of the College.

"The course offerings include not only day classes but also evening classes taught through Wesleyan's Adult Degree Program in Rocky Mount and in Goldsboro and Morrisville," Dr. Thornell said.

"Wesleyan is pleased to be able to provide senior citizens in Eastern North Carolina with an opportunity to enjoy taking college courses in subjects that interest them. Lifelong learning is something that Wesleyan wants to promote, and what better way to do this than to make courses easily available to seniors," he said.

"Any senior citizen who is interested in a subject and wants to study more about it is eligible to enroll, no matter the level of their educational background."

Seniors may enroll for a maximum of six hours per semester, and there is an administrative fee of \$25 per course.

Silver Scholars are expected to purchase any books or materials required for their courses. Whether they will

take tests, do homework, and receive feedback may be arranged with the course instructor.

"The men and women who make up Wesleyan's faculty are outstanding teachers and scholars," Dr. Thornell said. "More than 85 percent of our full-time faculty hold the Ph.D. or highest degree in their field. Many have published articles and books in their areas of expertise. They actively take part in and lead professional organizations, and have presented their work at state, national, and even international conferences.

"Wesleyan is proud to be able to share its faculty resources through the Silver Scholars Program," Dr. Thornell added. "The College hopes that the program will enrich the lives of many area citizens."

Applicants for courses must complete an enrollment form available from the Rocky Mount Adult Degree Program Office in the Braswell Administration Building, telephone 252-985-5128. Proof of age will be required.

The schedule of fall classes is available in the Adult Degree Program Office and also online at [www.ncwc.edu](http://www.ncwc.edu), then Academic Programs, then Classes, then Course Schedules.

Silver Scholars may enroll in classes following the first class meeting and during the late registration period, which runs through Sept. 2. Classes for regular students will begin the last week of August.



Executive Director Irene Brownlee (center) talks with Ron Matthews (right) of Haymount UMC in Fayetteville at a Academy for Leadership Excellence board meeting.

## Academy for Leadership Excellence forms board

The Academy for Leadership Excellence has announced the formation of a volunteer board of directors.

Led by Chair Larry Coats and Vice Chair Barbara Mulkey, the board seeks to guide the Academy in fulfilling its mission of equipping clergy and lay leaders in transforming ministry in both new and existing churches.

Joining Coats and Mulkey are David Crabtree, Robin Cummings, Don Curtis, Roger Elliott, Ken Eudy, Bishop Al Gwinn, Billy Ray Hall, Merritt Jones, Howard Lee, Ron Matthews, and Norris Tolson.

"I am excited about the broad spectrum of expertise represented by this board," said Coats.

"Our board members bring decades of leadership and experience in the Conference and the broader Christian community. We are looking forward to working together to advance the Academy for Leadership Excellence."

The Academy is an evolving ministry that traces its roots to the Office of Congregational Development.

Created in response to the need to physically grow the church, the focus of the Academy has shifted from land acquisition to the true catalyst for growth—people.

"I am convinced that the laity are poised to join in greater partnership with our clergy to strengthen our churches," said Bishop Gwinn.

"Our clergy and lay leaders are ready for additional training and responsibility to make their individual churches flourish."

Curtis agreed with the Bishop when he addressed the Conference clergy at the Bishop's Day Apart last year. "One of the challenges of the church is to understand the problems we have and engage laity to solve the problems with the clergy," he said.

Curtis and his wife, Barbara, have pledged \$1 million in support of the Academy, joining more than a hundred families who have invested in

this ministry.

Led by lay leaders including, Coats, Curtis, Tolson, Mulkey, and Bishop Gwinn, the Academy hired an executive director, Irene Brownlee, in 2006.

Since that time, the Academy has been developing assessment, coaching and training programs for clergy and lay leaders throughout the North Carolina Conference.

To date, more than 520 clergy and lay leaders have been trained in programs of the Academy. Anyone interested in learning more about the Academy for Leadership Excellence can contact Brownlee at (919) 832-9560, ext. 299.

## DEATHS

WYNN, Rosemary Todd, wife of the Rev. Sam Wynn (RA: Hollands) died June 5. A funeral was held on the morning of June 10 at Hollands UMC in Raleigh and an afternoon service was held at Pleasant Grove UMC in Bladenboro.

BASS, SR., Walton Needham (DU: retired) died June 7. A memorial service was held on June 21 at the William Preston Few Interfaith Chapel at Croasdaile Village in Durham.

BLUE, John P., (DU: retired) died June 8 in Florida. Services were held June 13 at the First UMC in Gainesville, FL.

TYSON, Ruth C. died June 18. She was the widow of the Rev. Marvin Dewey Tyson and the mother of the Rev. Gene Tyson (WI: retired). The funeral was conducted June 21 at St. James UMC in Greenville.



# August adult Bible study *continued from page 16*

hypocritical? What if we are both righteous and devilish? (Check out James 3:13-18 to see all of these possibilities.) It's like blessing and cursing from the same mouth

In reality, we do often show both the plus and the minus of our hearts. We exhibit both wisdom and irrelevance. The word "wisdom" that shows up so frequently in this week's study (James 3:13, 15, 17) is *sophia*.

That is a special kind of wisdom. It is more than mere high level intelligence; it means "having great understanding in practical matters." As we in the South sometimes say, "It is more than just book learning; it includes some street learning."

Therefore, James' injunction for wisdom is an injunction for decisions and thoughts that make a difference in how we live. It is practical wisdom. And James reminds us that such wisdom is not something of our own doing; it comes "from above" (3:15, 17).

For all of the insistence of James that we live good lives (3:13), that we show good works (2:17), that we have works as well as faith (2:26), the writer of the epistle knows that finally such works such practical wisdom—comes from God.

## What Someone Else Has Said:

C. Freeman Sleeper (*James*,

Abingdon) has written: "... (James') response shows that works can demonstrate a person's faith, while the reverse is not true. In effect, James is saying, 'How do I know what you believe unless it is expressed in your daily living, in your whole lifestyle?' That is what character is all about."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of mercy and wisdom, break into my heart with a bounty of grace so that my broken places may be healed and my calcified spirit may be torn open. Grant me such presence of Your love that I may praise and bless You even as I love and serve others. These are blessings I have seen in Jesus Christ and claim them now in His name..."

## August 24, 2008

Text: James 4:1-12

### "People of Godly Behavior"

One of the French translations of James 4:8 begins: "*Approchez-vous de Dieu, et il s'approchera de vous.*" It has been a while—a long while—since I was in French class with Professor Pierre Aubrey, but I think one way to put that French sentence into English would be: "Approach God and God himself will approach you."

It is God's very self who moves toward us ("God himself will approach you"). It is not some psychological disturbance. It is not some philosophical aberration. It is not some personality disorder. It is God's very self. This is no "reasonable facsimile." This is God.

A few months ago, NASA celebrated the landing of the robotic craft Phoenix on Mars. The odometer on

Phoenix showed 170 million miles. That is, by any definition, a long way to travel. In this week's lesson, James has a much shorter trip in mind. It is an awesome thing to claim to be in the presence of God, but that is the relationship that James describes in James 4:8: not just moving in the direction of God but actually "close to God," "near to God," "next to God."

That closeness to God creates godly people. As soon as today's lesson speaks of the closeness of God (v. 8), it begins to spell out of the kind of life that is to be lived when God is near: humility (v. 10) and the cessation of judging others (v. 12). Hmm. I wonder if there are any other offers.

James "lays a hurting" on the early church's propensity for "conflicts and disputes" (James 4:1). Church fusses are often vicious because not only do we tend to think our views are correct, but we add the righteous layer of thinking that God agrees with us. Sadly, the world has come to expect the church to fight. A number of people mentioned to me that there was no news in local papers from last May's General Conference of The United Methodist Church because there was no graphic, gripping, heavy-handed fighting going on. Does that mean that everything the General Conference did was pleasing to God? No. But it might mean that even our mistakes were offered in the closeness of God. And, who knows? When God is close, justice and love will eventually win.

## What Someone Else Has Said:

Ellsworth Kalas (*Parables from the Backside*, Abingdon) has written: "With love, you have to depend on the response of the other person, and that's a gamble. Yet that's the way God has chosen to relate to this world of ours."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Nearer, my God to thee,...still all my song shall be, nearer, my God, to thee..."

## August 31, 2008

Text: James 5:13-18

### "Prayerful Community"

This lesson is about prayer. In the New Testament, there are at least

five words that can be translated "pray." One means "to beg." Another means "to interrogate." A third word means "to wish for." Fourth is a word meaning "to invite." Finally, there is a word that means "to call on God." In this week's study text from James (5:13-18), it is this fifth word that is used for "pray": to call upon God.

Although the word often, even usually, denotes a petition or asking, there are times when the term means simply "be in touch with God." That is the community life to which James invites us: stay in touch with God. Bishop Reuben Job has stated John Wesley's three simple rules for the Christian life as (1) Do no harm, (2) do good, and (3) stay in love with God. I hear an echo of that summary in the epistle of James. Do no harm (James 4:11). Do good (3:13). Stay in love with God (5:7a).

Prayer, then, is a matter of staying in touch with God. Prayer is not a matter of our telling God some things that we think God needs to know as if the God who watches over the sparrows and lilies does not know about us (Matthew 6:25-33). Prayer is our acknowledgment that God does indeed know about us.

James offers several occasions for prayer: suffering (5:13), cheerfulness (5:13), sickness (5:14), confession (5:16). That's a pretty wide range of human experience. And such prayer, James reminds us, is "powerful and effective" (5:16). "availeth much" (King James Version), "powerful effect" (Moffatt), "tremendous power" (J. B. Phillips), "great virtue" (Knox), "dynamic in its working" (Amplified), "wonderful results" (Living Bible), "it can help a lot" (Contemporary English Version), "works very powerfully" (Jerusalem Bible), "powerful to be reckoned with" (The Message)... well, you get the idea.

James is of one spirit with Paul who advised "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

## What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Living Grace* (Abingdon), Walter Klaiber and Manfred Marquard have written: "It is unfortunate that, in our day, prayer is often restricted to petitions and requests, together with occasional thanksgiving. However, we will experience the essence and power of prayer when it becomes an expression of a comprehensive encounter with God, in which our lives are made to belong completely with him and before him."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Lord, teach us to pray. Teach us to find where Your kingdom breaks into this world..."

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# around the CONFERENCE



## Mt. Moriah - Fellowship Hall Groundbreaking

May 4 was an exciting day for the future of Mt. Moriah UMC in the Fayetteville District – youth led the service in the annual Youth Sunday Program and then a groundbreaking ceremony was held beginning the construction of a new fellowship hall. The youth were instrumental in helping raise money for the building project and are shown participating in the groundbreaking ceremony. Members of Mt. Moriah UMC expressed gratitude for the blessings that enabled the start of this project and the opportunities for expanding mission that it will provide.



## UMW - Racial Justice Workshop

NC Conference United Methodist Women met recently at Chestnut Street UMC, Lumberton, for a Racial Justice Workshop. The workshop theme was Migrant Ministry-Farm Workers. Pictured are Juanita Staples, vice president of District 6, Church Women United; Alexandria Jones, NC Outreach coordinator, National Farm Workers' Ministry; Caitlin Maxcy, staff member, National Farm Workers Ministry; JoAnn Barbour, Conference Social Action coordinator.



**Submitting  
Around the Conference  
Information**

Items for consideration can be emailed to [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org). The deadline is the 5th day of the month prior to publication. All articles and photos are subject to editing. Photographs or art should be recorded in the largest size and highest resolution possible. Send in JPG or TIFF formats. Please send articles and photos in separate files. Photos should not be embedded in articles or in photo viewing programs.

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The Rev. Jim Whitaker, pastor of Meroney UMC, and his wife, Dianna, stand in front of buggy after a 30 minute ride to the church to celebrate Meroney's 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Dean Beaver is the driver.

## Meroney UMC celebrated 200th anniversary in June

Meroney UMC of Bear Creek in the Sanford District, celebrated their 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary on Sunday June 8. The celebration was an old fashion day with 225 in attendance. Normal attendance on Sunday is about 100.

The church invited past preachers to return for the Celebrate 200<sup>th</sup> Sundays in February, April, and May. The Rev. Herman Brannen was the speaker of the day for the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The Rev. Warren Owens, the Rev. David Wade, and the Rev. Richard Farmer returned earlier in the spring. The

Rev. Vickie Shepherd will be the guest speaker in July. NC Conference Bishop Al Gwinn will be the guest speaker for the Aug. 3 homecoming.

The anniversary service began with the current preacher, the Rev. Jim Whittaker and the guest speaker, the Rev. Herman Brannen riding to church in a horse and buggy driven by Dean Beaver.

In the worship prelude, the pianist Angela Wilson and organist Denise Staley played as an overflow crowd gathered. Audrey Poe read a poem as Barry Parker played the trumpet.

Wesley's 1784 Sunday Service reader was used for the order of worship. William Rives gave a brief history of the church during the service. About 10 descendants of the churches founder William B. Meroney, were present for the service.

A history book of the 200 years of church history was available as well as a DVD with interviews of past preachers, pictures, and general information about the church. Dinner on the grounds followed the worship service.



Gary and Eleanor Moses attended the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at Meroney. The Moses family is related to the Rives, one of the original trustees of the property.

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# Stop Hunger Now marks 10th with million meal event

By Linda Bloom \*

UMNS - The Rev. Ray Buchanan, co-founder of the Society of St. Andrew, spent years working to banish hunger in the US when an experience in Sierra Leone made him re-think his focus.

In 1997, during the height of the African country's civil war, he visited with a number of pastors in the city of Bo who told him "they wore their clerical collars when they begged in the streets because people would be more generous."

Buchanan, a Texas native, former U.S. Marine and clergy member of the Virginia Annual (regional) Conference, took a personal approach to the problem of hunger.

Returning home "in a self-righteous fit," Buchanan raised \$65,000 in six weeks, enough to provide rice for every pastor's family in Sierra Leone for a year.

That experience in Africa helped propel Buchanan to found Stop Hunger Now in 1998. During its 10-year existence, the Raleigh-based organization has provided more than \$44 million in direct aid to more than 60 countries.

For 2008, Stop Hunger Now has set a goal to package 5.5 million meals. On Aug. 23, its "University Million Meal Event" hopes to bring together 4,000 volunteers from nine colleges and universities to assemble 1 million meals in one day.

"We have a vision of ending hunger in our lifetime," said the 61-year-old pastor. "In order to do that, it's not enough to feed the hungry. We've got to inspire, motivate and educate the whole world community to be involved."

## Birth of a movement

After the experience in Sierra Leone, Buchanan remembered a potential major donor, John Hewitt, co-founder of Jackson Hewitt and currently founder and CEO of Liberty Tax Service, who had once contacted the Society of St. Andrew about feeding famine victims. Soon, Hewitt helped Buchanan realize his dream of traveling to crisis areas, assessing the situation and quickly delivering food.

Stop Hunger Now was born. "I wanted to do a

half million dollars worth of hunger relief in the first year," he said, noting that the organization actually dispensed \$2.9 million worth of aid in 18 countries that year.

Although the mission of the first eight years focused on crisis relief related to wars or natural disasters, Buchanan knew that such circumstances were only a small percentage of the hunger problem. He wanted to address the systemic causes of hunger and needed a way to get volunteers involved.

A solution presented itself after the Asian tsunami in late 2004 when Stop Hunger Now received a call from Kids Against Hunger, a Minneapolis-based group with food for tsunami victims but needing transportation.

When Buchanan paid a visit to Minneapolis and saw young children, the elderly and the developmentally disabled working to assemble the meals, he knew he was on to something and received permission to use the formula for Stop Hunger Now. "What we have come up with is a way to involve folks hands-on into making a difference in international hunger," he said.



Ray Buchanan

## Assembling 1 million meals

During the million meal event on Aug. 23, students at North Carolina State University will be joined on their campus by participants from Meredith College, Peace College, Shaw University and St. Augustine's College to make up a team of 1,500 packagers.

The University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill packing site will draw 1,500 volunteers from that school, Duke University and North Carolina Central University. At East Carolina University, 750 volunteers are already lined up, and coordinators expect to bring in more participants from surrounding colleges. Liberty Tax Service is the title sponsor of the million meal event.

Several of the schools have taken part in meal packaging in the past. Last August, NC State put together more than 300,000 meals in one day. In January, Duke and NC Central volunteers worked with the Durham Rotary Club to assemble more than 90,000 meals.

## Partner organizations

Today, Stop Hunger Now accomplishes its work through dozens of partner organizations across the world. "We don't have international staff," he said. "We seek out the best partners



On Aug. 23, Stop Hunger Now's "University Million Meal Event" hopes to bring together 4,000 volunteers from nine NC colleges and universities to assemble 1 million meals in one day.

you can find in the areas where we work."

Stop Hunger Now distributes most of the packaged meals through schools around the world. "All the experts agree the best way to end hunger in our lifetime—and that's possible—is through school feeding programs," Buchanan said.

The meal packaging operation is run under the Operation Sharehouse Program located in Raleigh, Goldsboro and Charlotte, and South Hill, Va. Each six-serving assembled package includes rice, soy, dehydrated vegetables and a flavoring mix with 21 vitamins and minerals. The easily transportable food packages cost only 20 cents per meal and can keep for five years without refrigeration.

A grant from the Duke Endowment was used to open the Goldsboro location as a way of engaging rural churches in mission. "In less than a year, we've had over 30 rural churches in the surrounding counties involved," Buchanan said. By inviting other community groups to participate, United Methodists become leaders in the community, he added.

Stop Hunger Now maintains ties with United Methodist annual conferences and agencies, such as the UM Committee on Relief and its parent, the UM Board of Global Ministries.

The Rev. Steve Hickle, pastor of Fairmont UMC in Raleigh is chairman of the board of directors, and Rod Brooks, a member of Fairmont, has served as chief operating officer of Stop Hunger Now since July 2006.

Hickle said he contacted the Rev. Sam Dixon, UMCOR's chief executive, this spring to see if the agency could fund an emergency shipment of packaged meals to Haiti, where the government recently was toppled in the midst of food riots.

Two 40-foot containers have been shipped to Haiti, one in April and one in early June, each holding more than 285,000 servings of food. "The food was already packaged, warehoused and paid for by packing teams that had prepared them," he explained, adding that UMCOR supplied "the crucial link for delivery," around \$5,000 per container.

"In early fall of 2007, UMCOR also funded a container of this food to go to Peru in relief of earthquake victims there," Hickle said. "We look forward to the continuing opportunity to work with UMCOR for such compassionate responses."

More information on the University Million Meals Event or Stop Hunger now is available online at [www.stophungernow.org](http://www.stophungernow.org) or by calling (888) 501-8440.

\* Linda Bloom is a UM News Service news writer based in New York.



School children in Ibo Beach, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, eat food provided by Stop Hunger Now and funded by the UM Committee on Relief.



# Paul Leeland named bishop, assigned to serve the Alabama-West Florida Conference

Paul Leeland, NC Conference assistant to the bishop for two episcopal leaders, will be the episcopal leader of the Alabama-West Florida Conference on Sept. 1.

He was elected a bishop of The United Methodist Church on the sixth ballot taken during the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference meeting at Lake Junaluska July 16-19.

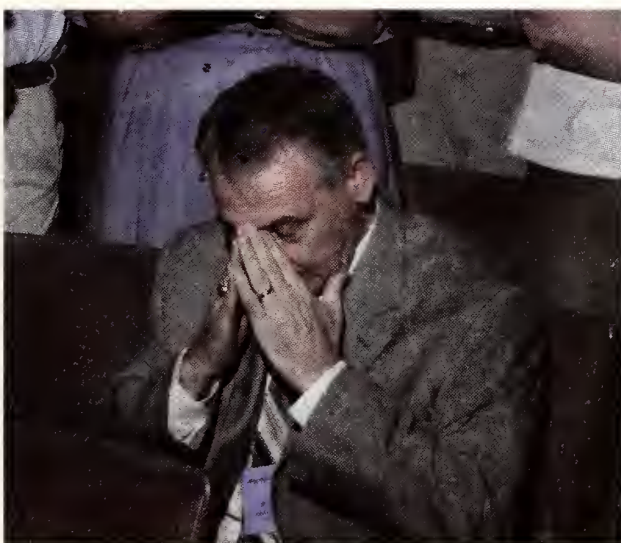
Leeland's ministry began in 1968 with a student appointment to a charge with two churches.

Only one bishop was elected to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of one of the 13 bishops in the jurisdiction. Six nominees were introduced during question and answer sessions with each of the 15 jurisdictional delegations.

The North Carolina Conference and the conference delegation had endorsed Leeland for election as a bishop.

"When the announcement was made that I was elected a bishop, I bowed my head and prayed, 'Jesus have mercy on me a sinner,'" Leeland said.

Throughout the time Leeland talked with jurisdictional conference delegates before the election,



ABOVE: Paul Leeland bows his head in prayer after hearing the announcement that he had been elected bishop.

BELOW: After being consecrated a bishop, Paul Leeland offered a closing prayer.



ABOVE: Janet Leeland smiles at her husband near the end of the consecration service.

Photos by Bill Norton

See "Leeland elected bishop," page 7

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## Carr UMC charts new course, gives church property to Shepherd's House UMC

By Flo Johnston \*

The story in Durham of Carr UMC's long decline is a familiar one, but no less poignant because of that.

By the beginning of this year, a once-thriving congregation of about 1,000 members in the 1950s had dwindled to just a few dozen, most of them elderly. Younger families and children, so vital to any church's long-term survival, were nowhere in evidence.

The neighborhood surrounding the church in East Durham also had changed. In its early days, Carr was situated amidst a white working-class community and drew most of its members from it. Over the years, the church, which was organized in 1886 in a fourth-floor room of the East Durham Cotton



(L-R) Parishioners George Isaacs and Foye Isaacs, stand in front of George Stephens and George Stephens Jr. Behind them are (L-R) Polly Ashley and Mildred Bowles and (back row) David and Cindy Fox. (Photo by John Rottet, The News & Observer)

See "Carr UMC," page 2



# Carr UMC charts new course *continued from page 1*

Mill, remained predominantly white, even though African-American and Hispanic families were now its closest neighbors.

On the last Sunday in June, Carr held the final service in its historic building at 107 N. Driver St. a location at the corner of East Main Street where United Methodists had held forth since 1950.

But amid the sadness of change, there was also celebration, because the Carr congregation was not planning to turn out the lights and walk away. The final service in the church was joint worship with a new congregation, Shepherd's House UMC.

During the service Carr turned over a box of church keys to the newcomers.

## Seeking divine guidance

Carr voted in January to relocate and to give the church property to Shepherd's House, a church composed mostly of immigrants from Zimbabwe.

The Rev. Cheryl Lawrence, pastor, said that during the months since the decision, church members have sought divine guidance in charting a new course for themselves.

Dwindling and dying congregations, especially in urban settings, have become a perennial problem in most mainline denominations, including the United Methodist Church.

It appears that Carr, however, may be the first to face the challenge by making such a decision.

The Rev. Gray Southern, superintendent of the Durham District, said the usual option for an urban church like Carr is to first try to draw the neighborhood into its services, an option this older all-white congregation had explored unsuccessfully over the past decades.

"If that does not work, we ask churches to begin making sure a viable Christian ministry will outlast themselves. Even if they leave, [they are urged] to do what Carr is doing, leave a legacy," Southern said.

He noted further that the United Methodist Church considers an average of 100 people in worship as critical mass, the number a church needs to support a full-time pastor and to carry on its work of "being" the church.

Just like Carr members, the district superintendent said he was both sad and excited.

"While it's sad, it's also wonderful to see a congregation with a spirit of hope for new life for themselves and for Shepherd's House," he said.

## A time of history, family, and loss

During worship on a Sunday in late May, Mildred Bowles, 85, her eyes brimming with tears, pointed to one of the beautiful stained glass

windows in the large sanctuary that seats 500.

"My mother's Sunday school class held suppers to raise money for these windows," she said. And it was Bowles' family, the Barbees, who gave part of the land on which the church facility is located.

George Stephens, 88, and his sister, Foye Isaacs, 93, grew up in the church. They both opposed the decision to relocate.

"I've been a member of this church for 80 years," Stephens said. "I am not leaving my church, my church is leaving me."

## Ready to move on

As in every loss, it takes time to resolve issues of sadness and anger. But Gloria Perry and her husband, Jim, say they had made that journey and were ready to move on.

"I feel very good about handing over our building to another congregation that can serve the community in a way that we were not able to," she said. "We know we can't stay here and survive because of our numbers and because of the physical plant."

## New beginnings

The relocated Carr congregation began meeting on the first Sunday in July in the old sanctuary at Pleasant Green United Methodist, located just over the county line in Orange County.

Services are being held at 1:30 p.m. and Holy Communion is served on the first, third and fifth Sundays of each month, Lawrence said.

The Rev. Brian Wingo, pastor at Pleasant Green, was pastor at Carr for seven years, from 1996 to 2002.

"I am overwhelmed by what a gracious gift it is for Carr to offer its building and parsonage to a church that can truly make inroads in the community," he said. "This means that a Methodist presence in the area will continue and that makes me feel good as a former pastor. I feel blessed to have served a church that is taking such a bold step in ministry to the community."

## A sign of God's kingdom

Cindy Fox, a third generation member at Carr, wrote the "words of transfer" that were used during the final service.

The framed document, presented to Shepherd's House, read in part: "To our dear brothers and sisters in Christ of the Shepherd's House United Methodist Church: We the household of saints of Carr United Methodist do lovingly bequeath to you our church building at 107 N. Driver St. and our parsonage at 111 N. Driver St., for the continuation of service, dedication and love in seeking to be a sign of God's kingdom in this community and in the world."

Phyllis Stalker, a Carr member, designed and coordinated the creation of a huge quilted wall hanging, a cross, in which she incorporated church symbols and liturgical colors. It had been presented to the congregation during the final homecoming service on June 22.

"This was a part of Carr that we could take with us," Lawrence said.

## Shepherd's House

"God has done something wonderful and awesome in East Durham," she said. "God sent Shepherd's House into our midst, a church that can do mission and ministry effectively in this neighborhood and we are ready to make a new start in the old sanctuary at Pleasant Green."

The Rev. Chris Chikooore, pastor of Shepherd's House, conducts worship in both English and Shona, the language of Zimbabwe. About 120 of his 150-member flock are Zimbabweans,

many of whom drive from all over the area to worship at this unique church.

With space to grow, Shepherd's House has already begun to reach out to African-Americans in the East Durham neighborhood. Plans are under way to start a tutoring program in the fall.

"This is the hand of God," Chikooore said. "It is difficult to minister in a community that does not look like you. We are celebrating because Carr will be the church in a new place."

Shepherd's House congregation led the music for the final worship service at Carr and Lawrence preached. The last hymn was "Amazing Grace" and was sung in English and Shona.

\* Flo Johnston is a correspondent for The Durham News of the News & Observer published on Saturdays in Durham County. Article reprinted with permission.



The Rev. Cheryl Lawrence



The Rev. Chris Chikooore

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# “No Man Left Behind” discipleship training coming in September

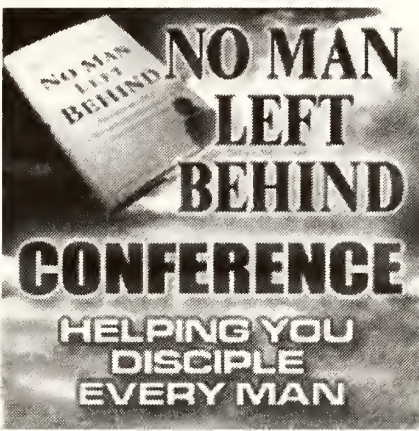
A “No Man Left Behind” event, sponsored by the NC Conference United Methodist Men, will be held Sept. 11-13 at St. James UMC in Greenville.

The event offers a system for discipling men.

The model, built on the foundation of discipleship and leadership, helps churches move men down a path of spiritual development, transforming men who need Christ into mature disciples.

The framework for “No Man Left Behind” is designed so it can be used in churches of any size.

The two-and-a half days of training is for pastors, men’s ministry leaders,



and potential leaders.

Man in the Mirror Ministries, a national leader in men’s ministry and an official partner of United Methodist Men, will provide the training for the event.

Sign up by calling Man in the Mirror at 1-800-929-2536. Registration is also available online at the Man in the Mirror web site at: [www.maninthemirror.org](http://www.maninthemirror.org).

Chartered UMM groups receive a discounted price, and pastors attend at no cost if accompanied by at least two men from their church.

Questions can be directed to Rick Hebert (252-355-8906) or by email – [rhebert@suddenlink.net](mailto:rhebert@suddenlink.net).

# Four cybersafety, cyberministry workshops coming this fall to NCC

By Jay Locklear \*

The landscape for ministry is constantly evolving, and the Church is challenged to be flexible enough to change.

How can pastors and laity minister in the culture while remaining true to God’s message?

Technology is changing the ways ministry is done – social networking, e-mail, blogs, live television broadcast and other forms of multimedia are becoming the new pulpits of this society.

There is potential danger, and the possibility for error inherent in these tools. Daily, people are subjected to reports of misconduct and wrongdoing perpetuated by technology.

The NC Conference Safe Sanctuaries Committee, in partnership with the Sexual Ethics Committee, is presenting a series of workshops titled “Shepherding 21st Century Sheep: Cyberspace, Cybersafety, Cyberministry” to address these concerns.

The workshops will be led by Paul O’Briant, who is a member of Pilmoor Memorial UMC. Paul is also the Director of Media and Technology Services for Currituck County Schools.

He is a national speaker on the subjects of cyberministry and cybersafety, including serving as the

keynote speaker at a Cybersafety Conference sponsored by the General Board of Discipleship in 2007.

The workshops will be held in four locations across the Conference on Saturday mornings from 9:15am to 12:30pm as follows:

- Haymount UMC in Fayetteville — September 6
- White Plains UMC in Cary — September 20
- Wesley Memorial UMC in Wilmington — September 27
- Edenton UMC in Edenton — November 15

The nonrefundable cost is \$5 per participant, and churches are encouraged to send participants from diverse ministry areas.

Pre-registration ten days before the workshop is required. Churches may register a group under one name.

To download a complete brochure with all the information, including a registration form, please visit the Conference Safe Sanctuaries page: <http://www.nccumc.org/childrnmin/cybersafety.pdf>.

To receive a brochure by mail, please contact the Office of Children, Youth and Young Adult Ministries at 1-800-849-4433.

\* Jay Locklear is a member of the NC Conference Safe Sanctuaries Committee.

# Gathering of all NCC boards, committees set for Aug. 16, officers to be elected

By Carol Goehring \*

The NC Conference of the United Methodist Church, at its recent Annual Conference session elected leaders for a new quadrennium.

The nominations process was new: lay and clergy members nominated themselves for service in areas in which they expressed interest, expertise or passion.

The gathering of all those selected for Conference Boards and Committees will take place at Methodist University in Fayetteville on August 16 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

This will be the only gathering of all members elected for service in the quadrennium, 2008-2012.

The purpose of the meeting is two-fold. Bishop Gwinn will lead participants in understanding the expectations of Conference board and committee members, including the relationship of each “team” in the Conference Connectional struc-

ture, and the core values that guide the work.

Other speakers will include the Conference Lay Leader, Treasurer and Connectional Ministries Director who will discuss the vision of the Connectional Table and the ministry of the North Carolina Conference.

This presentation is designed to establish the understanding among all conference leaders that they play a significant role in the ministry and that their participation is crucial to the vitality of the UMC in eastern North Carolina and beyond.

The gathering will also include time for boards and committees to meet briefly in a break-out session to elect leadership, executive teams, or officers. In the break-out sessions, an overview of the committee’s work will be shared.

\* The Rev. Carol Goehring is the NC Conference director of connectional ministries.


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## letters to the EDITOR

### Applauding all those engaged in making disciples

To those faith communities who were recognized as Acts 2 churches at Annual Conference—congratulations! The ministries of excellence and the leadership that my sisters and brothers have offered are exemplary—worthy of recognition and emulation.

Yet, as we celebrate Acts 2 churches, may we also celebrate every church in our Annual conference which has a passion for our Lord Jesus Christ and which displays that passion in ways not only commendable, but praiseworthy.

Gathering data and totaling numbers are useful in some ways; however, using these as the primary tools to discern ministry's fruits is regrettable, for numbers do not always tell the whole story.

I applaud those pastors and evangelism teams who also are fervently engaged in making disciples of Jesus Christ, who led people to Christ and received new members this year, but whose numbers did not meet Acts 2 criteria.

We must acknowledge that there are indeed among us far more churches than were recognized at Annual Conference who are also faithfully centered in Jesus Christ, who also have displayed a focused spiritual formation, who also daily take risks in their mission and ministry to the world, and whose worship is also passionate and inclusive.

Thanks be to God for the world of ALL United Methodists in our vibrant North Carolina Annual Conference—people of God whose aim is high, whose reach is broad, whose faith is deep, and whose witness is profound.

The Rev. Bill Braswell, Wilmington

### Letters to the editor guidelines

Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on confidentiality or

those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org).

Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

## Lease of SMU property for library heads to United Methodist 'supreme court'

By Linda Green \*

UMNS - A faculty member of Southern Methodist University (SMU) wants The United Methodist Church's highest court to rule on whether the leasing of property to The President George W. Bush Foundation violates the university's articles of incorporation and subsidizes a political view point.

The Rev. Jeannie Trevino-Teddle, director of the Mexican-American program at Perkins School of Theology at United Methodist-related SMU and a delegate to the South Central Jurisdictional Conference from the Central Texas Annual (regional) Conference, asked for a decision of law that will go to the United Methodist Judicial Council this fall.

"The main thing I am most concerned about is that by leasing property to the Bush Foundation, at less than fair market value, we are in effect subsidizing a policy institute that has a specific political ideology and ideological point of view," she said, adding the denomination's law book, the *Book of Discipline*, allows church property "to be used for the work of the church and not to subsidize a political point of view."

In February, SMU officials approved giving the Bush Foundation a 99-year lease to build a presidential library, museum and policy institute on university property.

The lease is \$1,000 for 99 years—renewable for up to 250 years.

Trevino-Teddle asked Bishop Robert Hayes of Oklahoma, who was presiding over that session of the South Central Jurisdictional Conference, for the ruling of law.

Hayes said he will determine if

it "was within the bounds of SMU to lease this land for the amount of money that they wanted."

"I have to examine her petition and determine whether I feel that the conference has violated the terms of the *Book of Discipline*," Hayes explained. "I will write and respond to her seeking a declaration of law and submit it to the Judicial Council."

The council will then examine the question and Hayes' decision and make a ruling when it meets in October. The council reviews all bishops' decisions of law during annual and jurisdictional conference sessions.

The delegates to the South Central Jurisdiction, owners of the Southern Methodist University, on July 17 affirmed the leasing of the land to the Bush Foundation. Along with that approval, the delegates asked that the university's integrity be protected.

Trevino-Teddle said allowing the institute on the campus of SMU is "contrary to what the United Methodist Book of Discipline allows, and I would like to get a ruling on that."

Her question for a ruling of law asks: "Is the approval of the lease of property of Southern Methodist University by the South Central Jurisdiction and Southern Methodist University, at less than market value, to the Bush Foundation for the purpose of establishing a policy institute, in conflict with the articles of incorporation of Southern Methodist University, the rules of the South Central Jurisdiction and/or *The Book of Discipline*, specifically Para. 2503.4, which requires all United Methodist property to be 'kept, maintained . . . for the benefit of The United Method-

See "Bush library at SMU," page 6

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# Biloxi mission team says thanks by sending mission team to NC

By Karen Arseneau \*

In the wee hours of June 21, some 10 members of Biloxi First United Methodist joined hands in prayer with their spouses and pastor, the Rev. Gary Thompson to ask God's blessing on their trip to Wilmington, NC, and to bless the work the team would be doing there with the Wilmington Area Rebuilding Ministry.

The trip was at the invitation of Murrie Lee who is a member of Trinity UMC in Wilmington. Lee came to Biloxi First UMC 18 times over a two year period after Hurricane Katrina. He thought some of Biloxi First UMC's members should be reunited with Wilmington-area volunteers who had come to Biloxi for disaster recovery work. The trip would also give the Mississippians an opportunity to work at repairing homes in Wilmington.

Biloxi FUMC hosted more than 3,000 disaster recovery volunteers during the first 26 months after Katrina. The state that sent the most volunteers was North Carolina, and the majority of those were from the Wilmington District. Biloxi First members believed they could not pass up an opportunity to say "thank you" to all those recovery workers.

The team bunked in Trinity UMC's Family Life Center. Showers in the "Rubber Ducky" trailer were provided by the MERCIMission Center, and the team reports that they were well fed. They were also treated to a traditional

Carolina "pig-pickin' " cookout and a pot-luck supper attended by nearly 100 North Carolina volunteers.

One night the team made a traditional Gulf Coast dinner for the Wilmington volunteers that included Cajun barbecued shrimp and red beans and rice. They also gave each of their volunteers Mardi Gras beads.

The Mississippi group was divided into two work parties. One rehabbed the exterior of a house belonging to a widow, and the other group refurbished the interior of a mobile home belonging to a middle-aged woman on a fixed income. Both projects were completed on Friday.

Even the dogs Lucy, Houston and Austin, who accompanied the team, visited an assisted living center near the church. The dogs are part of a Pet Ministry at Biloxi FUMC.

The team members said they were blessed to finally be on the giving end of helping others. However, they said the best experience was the empowerment by the Holy Spirit to complete the work which needed to be done and the strengthening of ties with their Lord and Savior and with fellow members on the mission team.

*\* Karen Arseneau was the mission workteam leader. Her house in Mississippi was completely destroyed by Hurricane Katrina and was rebuilt entirely by volunteers, many of whom came from NC.*

Reprinted with permission from the *Mississippi Christian Advocate*.



Mission team members from Biloxi First UMC in Mississippi prepare to leave for North Carolina early on June 21. The 3 dogs on the workteam, Lucy, Houston & Austin are part of the church's Pet Ministry team, and they visited the residents at Spring Arbor assisted living center in Wilmington.

## Trustees seek input on headquarters

The 2008 Annual Conference approved a proposal by the Conference Board of Trustees to sell the existing United Methodist Building and build a new conference headquarters in Greenfield Park in Garner. The needs assessment phase of this building project is beginning.

Comments and ideas about what should be in the building and advice from past building experiences are requested. Ideas and "best advice" should be sent to the building project team at [nccbuilds@nccumc.org](mailto:nccbuilds@nccumc.org).

All ideas will be compiled and considered during this important assessment phase. Visit [www.nccumc.org/treasurer/nccbuilds.htm](http://www.nccumc.org/treasurer/nccbuilds.htm) for more information.



For 17 years, a day-long lay speaker training has been held at First UMC, Hamlet in support of lay speakers throughout the Rockingham District.

## Rockingham District lay speaker training held in Hamlet

The Rockingham District Lay Speaker Training earlier this year had 140 in attendance.

The oldest participant was Earl Bradshaw, a 92 year-old member of Fellowship UMC in Hamlet. Bradshaw has attended almost every year the training program has been held.

The day-long event has been held at First Church, Hamlet on the 1st Sunday in February for the past 17 years. This spiritual retreat—type experience of study, fellowship and worship began 28 years ago when the late Bishop Joseph B. Bethea was serving as district superintendent.

The Rev. Leonard Fairley, the pres-

ent district superintendent, brought words of greeting, encouragement and challenge to the assembled group, who have made this second mile commitment in ministry. The host church pastor, the Rev. Adolph Smith, provided the 11 a.m. sermon.

The Advanced Course training was led by Tom Walden, immediate past NCC Director of Lay Speaking, who has led the course for many years.


The Basic Course was led this year by a husband and wife team, Eston and Katie Brinkley, of Wilmington. For a number of years, Linda Harris, current NCC Director of Lay Speaking, was leader for the Basic Course.

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## Members responded to call of Annual Conference offerings

The North Carolina Conference scheduled three offerings to be taken at the 2008 Annual Conference.

In addition, an offering for the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) was added at the request of conference members.

"The church responded over and above the other offerings to a request for UMCOR that was not in the original program, said Charlotte Wade, lay member from the Raleigh District.

"It just speaks to the spirit and heart of the delegates that were present," she said.

Following are the offering designations and the total amounts received:

- Lake Junaluska Dam Restoration = \$28,713.80
- Offering for the Advance = \$5,230.02
- Conference Board of Laity Ministry = \$4,987.35
- UMCOR = \$6,242.86

## Higher Education Foundation partners with NCC UMF and raises "dollars for scholars"

(UMNS)—The UM Higher Education Foundation (UMHEF) has funded 463 United Methodist Dollars for Scholars scholarships for the 2008-2009 academic year.

The Dollars for Scholars initiative encourages local congregations to raise \$1,000 for a member enrolled in or planning to enroll in a United Methodist-related college, university or seminary.

The foundation matches these funds, through collaborative partnerships with participating United Methodist-related schools.

NC Conference students have an additional opportunity for a match of \$1,000 through the Quadruple Your Dollars for Scholars program.

In a partnership between UMHEF and the NC Conference United Methodist Foundation (UMF), students qualifying for this initiative can receive an award totaling \$4,000.

"United Methodist Foundation is very pleased to join other conference area foundations within the General Church providing support for this wonderful matching scholarship program within the North Carolina Annual Conference. It is a vital part of the Foundation's stewardship ministry to be in active partnership with Methodist University, North Carolina Wesleyan College and Louisburg College – and in partnership with the United Methodist Higher Education Foundation in this important endeavor," said Lynn James, UMF's executive director.

Seven other foundations, including the United Methodist Foundation of the Western NC Conference, are also Quadruple Your Dollars for Scholars partners.

For more information, visit [www.umhef.org](http://www.umhef.org).

## United Methodists in Africa elect first female bishop

(UMNS)—The Rev. Joaquina Filipe Nhanala was elected July 23 as the first female United Methodist bishop in Africa.

Nhanala, 51, the pastor of Matola UMC in Mozambique, was elected during the July 22-24 meeting of the denomination's Africa Central Conference at Africa University in Mutare.

She will succeed Bishop João

Somane Machado, who is retiring as leader of the Mozambique area.

Besides serving a large church in Matola, a suburb of Maputo, Nhanala has coordinated women's projects for the Mozambique church.

She also led a World Relief HIV/AIDS program designed to mobilize churches for education and advocacy in Mozambique's three southern provinces.



Bishop Nhanala

## A.M.E. Zion Church elects first female bishop

(UMNS)—The Rev. Mildred "Bonnie" Hines made history July 19, as the first woman elected a bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

The vote was tallied following the episcopal election of the Rev. Darryl B. Starnes and the Rev. Dennis V. Proctor.

The third vote did not meet the

two-thirds majority required in the *Book of Discipline*. A repeat vote was cast, and as soon as it was tallied, the more than 3,000 delegates and others at the convention erupted into shouts, dancing, laughter and tears.

Hines took the episcopacy, just as the clock struck midnight.

## World Council of Churches seeking five young people for internships

The World Council of Churches will welcome five young people, ages 18-30, who are committed to the ideals of the ecumenical movement, to serve as interns in its Geneva offices from February 2009 to January 2010.

Interns will bring their energy, commitment and fresh ideas to an assigned WCC working area.

Each intern will be expected to plan an ecumenical project to implement

in his or her home context when the internship is finished.

With their application, candidates must send background information about their church or Christian youth network.

The closing date for receiving applications is Sept. 15.

More information and downloadable application forms can be found at the web site <http://www.oikoumene.org/?id=3187>.

## BIRTHS

Kara Alexis Pullins, daughter of Chad (Fayetteville: Crossroads) and Amanda Pullins was born July 11.

## Let's Journey To... Oberammergau May - August 2010

The first Passion Play was held in Oberammergau in 1634, in fulfillment of a vow to perform the "drama of the sufferings and death of the Lord" every ten years, if the pestilence that ravaged the village would ease. Now, more than 375 years since the first performance was made, the vow continues to be fulfilled. YOU can join people from all corners of the world as they converge on the little town in Southern Bavaria to witness the spectacular drama of the Passion of the Lord. Register by Labor Day & Save.

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## Bush Library at SMU continued from page 4

ist Church and subject to the usages and the Discipline of The United Methodist Church' " and said lease would subsidize a specific political and ideological point of view?"

While the library and museum

have been welcomed by many United Methodists, others have opposed the institute fearing it will be a partisan think-tank.

"The issue is the policy institute," Trevino-Teddle said. "The United Methodist Church should not be in the business of endorsing any political point of view—whether that is Democrat, Republican, Green party—that is not what The United Methodist Church has stated the use

of Methodist property is for. I think there is a violation there."

Acknowledging that seeking the question of law makes her walk a fine line with the university that employs her, she emphasized, "I am a Christian first. I am speaking out of my faith and to me that is all that is important."

\* Linda Green is a UM News Service news writer based in Nashville, Tenn.

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# Leeland elected bishop at SEJ Conference *from page 1*

“partnership” was a key word he used in discussions.

“It is important that we create an atmosphere of trust and collegiality with those who make up the context of ministry, reminding us that we are the Body of Christ,” Leeland said.

The 2008 NC Annual Conference was the 41st for Leeland.

During the conference, Leeland “sensed it possibly could be my last as a member of the North Carolina Annual Conference if I was elected a bishop. There was a sense of loss. I remembered the ministries that had been accomplished and the growth in mission that had been accomplished” since joining the conference.

## Consecration service

Leeland selected two colleagues in ministry, both retired clergy in the conference, to present him for consecration during the Saturday service.

He said Glenda Johnson had served as his spiritual mentor for many years and Dennis Ricks, who he admired for his effective ministry, had been his pastoral mentor since seminary.

During the consecration ceremony, led by Bishop Lindsey Davis, all active and retired bishops in attendance stepped forward to lay their hands on Leeland and offer a short prayer of support.

Offering almost fatherly advice to Leeland, retiring bishop J. Lawrence McCleskey during the Consecration Sermon urged him to act as a shepherd for his flock.

“As you care for the flock, you will travel down interstate highways, city streets and country lanes that you’ve never seen before, to seek a wayward sheep, encourage a disgruntled flock, listen to a few angry goats. You must lead them into the mission of spreading scriptural holiness, which means you will make difficult decisions, take solitary stands, walk through some lonely days, and lay awake on some long sleepless nights,” McCleskey said.

“All who are here have prayed for you,” McCleskey said, “and will continue to do so. We will give much of

ourselves to help you be faithful to your commitment to this new call.”

Bishop Leeland offered the benediction at the close of the service.

## The role of a bishop

Bishops serve as the spiritual and administrative leader in one of more conferences (regional areas). Included in their responsibilities is the appointment of pastors to local churches and to other places of ministry.

Under church law, Leeland can serve as a conference bishop for 12 years. SEJ bishops are appointed to one or more of 15 annual conferences within nine Southern states which make up the SEJ: Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi. Episcopal appointments are for four years and can be renewed.

Newly-elected bishops cannot serve in their home conference for four years following their election.

## A lifetime of service

In addition to student appointments, Leeland has served as a chaplain at Duke Medical Center and as pastor at Franklin, St. Andrews (Raleigh), Westminster (Kinston),

St. Luke (Sanford), and as Goldsboro District Superintendent.

He served as assistant to the bishop and director of ministerial relations for Bishop Marion Edwards and for Bishop Al Gwinn.

Leeland was awarded a B.A. degree from NC Wesleyan College in Rocky Mount, M.Div. and Th.M. from Duke Divinity School, and Ed. D. from NC State University. He currently is a trustee at NC Wesleyan College and on the Duke Divinity School Board of Visitors.

He and his wife, Janet, celebrated

their 40th year of marriage in July. They have three adult children and four grandchildren. Janet holds a Master’s in Social Work and has worked with Hospice for 14 years.

Bishop Gwinn, who received a second four-year appointment to the NC Conference, had not announced by the printing deadline for the Advocate who would be appointed as the new assistant to the bishop and director of ministerial relations.

Paul and Janet Leeland will move to Montgomery, AL in late August to begin his new assignment on Sept. 1.



LEFT: Bishop Al Gwinn (left) and Bishop Marion Edwards (right) escort Paul Leeland to the stage following the announcement that Leeland had been elected a bishop. Leeland served as assistant to the bishop and director of ministerial relations for both Gwinn and Edwards.

Photos by Bill Norton

BELOW LEFT: Bishop Hope Morgan Ward offers a prayer for Paul Leeland. All of the bishops present individually said prayers for Leeland as he was kneeling.



BELOW RIGHT: Bishops and a deacon raise hands over Paul Leeland during the consecration service.





# Gwinn to continue serving in North Carolina Conference, other episcopal assignments announced at SEJ Conference

Bishop Alfred Wesley Gwinn, Jr. will lead the North Carolina Conference for a second quadrennium (four years) following the announcement of episcopal assignments at the end of the July 16-19 Southeastern Jurisdictional (SEJ) Conference at Lake Junaluska.

"I am more excited with this second four-year appointment to the North Carolina Conference than I was with the first four years," said Bishop Gwinn.

"This excitement comes out of the knowledge of the wonderful skill sets and strengths of the churches, laity, and clergy in the Conference."

Twelve bishops either returned to their area or were assigned to another area. Bishop Lawrence McCleskey retired at the SEJ conference. Paul Leeland was elected a bishop to fill the vacancy (*see page 1*).

Bishops are assigned to a conference or episcopal area for a quadrennium.

A bishop can be re-appointed to a second quadrennium in the same area.

Appointment to a third quadrennium in the same area is possible if it is in the best interests of the jurisdiction and the appointment receives a two-thirds vote of the jurisdic-

tional episcopacy committee and a two-thirds vote by the jurisdictional conference.

Four bishops received new area assignments:

- Bishop Paul L. Leeland—Alabama-West Florida Area (Alabama-West Florida Conference), first-time assignment.
- Bishop Lindsey Davis—Louisville Area (Kentucky and Red Bird Missionary Conferences), moving from North Georgia.
- Bishop B. Michael Watson—North Georgia Area (North Georgia Conference), moving from South Georgia.

- Bishop Larry M. Goodpaster—Charlotte Area (Western North Carolina Conference), moving from Alabama-West Florida.

In addition to Bishop Gwinn, the bishops reassigned to their areas are:

- Bishop Charlene Payne Kammerer—Richmond Area (Virginia Conference).
- Bishop James E. Swanson, Sr.—Holston Area (Holston Conference).
- Bishop Mary Virginia Taylor—Columbia Area (South Carolina Conference)
- Bishop Hope Morgan Ward—Mississippi Area (Mississippi Conference).
- Bishop Timothy Whitaker—Florida Area (Florida Conference) for a third quadrennium.
- Bishop William H. Willimon—Birmingham Area (North Alabama Conference).
- Bishop Richard J. Wills Jr.—Nashville Area (Memphis and Tennessee Conferences).



## The Southeastern Jurisdiction College of Bishops

Members of the SEJ College of Bishops present for a photograph before the consecration of Paul L. Leeland as a bishop in The United Methodist Church were: Front row, L-R – (standing) James Swanson, Marshall L. Meadors, Jr., Mary Virginia Taylor, (sitting) Paul A. Duffey, R. Kern Eustler, Paul L. Leeland, G. Lindsey Davis, Jr., L. Bevel Jones III, Clay F. Lee, Jr., (standing) Hope Morgan Ward, Alfred Wesley Gwinn, Jr., B. Michael Watson, and Robert C. Morgan. Back row, L-R – Joe E. Pennel, Jr., Marion M. Edwards, Larry M. Goodpaster, Thomas B. Stockton, Robert H. Spain, Timothy W. Whitaker, Richard C. Looney, H. Hasbrouck Hughes, Jr., Ray W. Chamberlain, Kenneth L. Carder, Robert E. Fannin, Charlene P. Kammerer, Richard Wills, Jr., J. Lawrence McCleskey, and James R. King, Jr. (Photo by Bill Norton)

## Two bishops, a judicial council member elected from NCC since 2004

"It is monumental for our conference to be privileged to have two persons elected a bishop and one person elected to the Judicial Council over the last four years," said Jerry Bryan, conference secretary.

Paul Leeland was elected a bishop in 2008, Belton Joyner was elected to the Judicial Council in 2008, and Hope Morgan Ward was elected a bishop in 2004.

The late Joseph B. Bethea was elected a bishop in 1988.

Bishops serve as spiritual and administrative leaders of one or more conferences (regional areas). They appoint pastors to local churches and other ministry locations.

Area assignments can be given to a bishop if he or she will not be

68-years-of-age on or before July 1 of the year when a jurisdictional conference is held.

The Judicial Council is the "supreme court" of the church. It has a total of nine clergy and lay members. Elections take place at General Conference and are for a term of eight years.

Members can serve a maximum of two consecutive eight-year terms.

While on the council, they cannot be delegates to general or jurisdictional conferences or on general or jurisdictional boards or agencies.



Belton Joyner

## Conference clergy and laity elected to serve in SEJ positions

The Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference elected 19 clergy and laypersons from the NC Conference to serve in jurisdictional positions during the 2008-2012 quadrennium. Following, by positions, are elected individuals:

Nominations — Beth Norris and Albert Shuler.

Standing Committees — Episcopacy—Emily Innes and Beth Hood; Financial Administration—Carol Goehring and Mack Parker; Conferences—Bill Norton, Gary Locklear, Leonard Fairley, and Beth Hood; and Connectional Table—Gray Southern, LaNella Smith, Albert Shuler, and Irene Brownlee.

Committee on Coordination and Accountability — Bishop Al Gwinn.

Committee on Finance and Administration — Christine Dodson.

Lake Junaluska Assembly Board of Directors—Robby Lowry; Foundation chair—Bishop Al Gwinn; Junaluska Associates Chair—Ernie Porter.

Hinton Rural Life Center — Board of Directors—Nancy Wilson; Hinton Larger Community—Rufus Stark and Rene Bideaux; At Large—George Johnson; Executive Committee—Rufus Stark, board chair and George Johnson, vice chair of assessment.

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Gary Locklear offered a testimony about disaster response in Mississippi following Hurricane Katrina. Delegates and guests from the NC Conference participated in a question and answer session with episcopal nominees before the voting for bishop began. Lynn Hill, standing in background, is shown through a mirror in the back of the room. Emily Farnell delivers red ribbons signifying the Holy Spirit to be placed on the altar during the opening worship service. Lawrence Johnson presents a report on inclusiveness.



**NC Conference SEJ delegates** and friends standing in front of Stuart Auditorium at Lake Junaluska are (L-R): Beth Hood, Irene Brownlee, Won Namkoong, Gayle Felton, Cashar Evans, Annie Fairley, Laura Lord, Carl Frazier, Beth Hook, Jimmy Shuler, Duncan McMillan, LaNella Smith, Malachi Wade, Belton Joyner, Anna Gail Workman, Emily Farnell, Mack McMillan, Bob Bergland, Gray Southern, Emily Innes, Tim Reeves, Steve Hickle, Barry Merrill, Mack Parker, Laura Little, Steve Taylor, Powell Osteen, Patrick Mann, Rosanna Panizo-Valladares, Leonard Fairley, Gary Locklear, Chuck Cook, Tom Walden, Laurie Hays Coffman, Edgar DeJesus, Trish Archer, Sam Isley, Edith Gleaves, Kong NamKung, Carol Goehring, Albert Shuler, Paul Chitnis, Paul Leeland, Paul Stallsworth, and Bill Norton. (Photo by Randy Innes)

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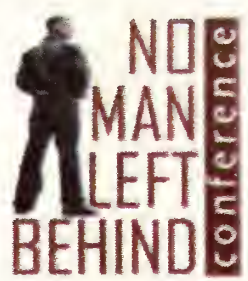
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# Jurisdiction elects general agency members

Nine individuals from the North Carolina Conference have been elected to serve on general agencies for the 2008-2012 quadrennium from the Southeastern Jurisdiction.

The General Conference Secretary determines the number of persons on agencies to be elected from each of the five jurisdictions.

The agency and persons elected are: Church and Society, Emily Farnell; Discipleship, Robbie Lowry; Global Ministries and Women's Division, Emily Innes; Higher Education, Regina Henderson; Pension & Health Benefits, Gray Southern; UM Publishing House, Carl Frazier; Communications, Bill Norton; Christian Unity, Edgardo Colon-Emeric; and Status & Role of Women, Annie Fairley.

In addition, eight individuals were elected to be on the Nominations Pool to serve on the General Board of the National Council on Churches of Christ in the USA.

Those elected are: Patricia Archer, Will Archer, Edgar DeJesus, Sam Isley, Duncan McMillan, Jeanne Rouse, Jimmie Shuler, and Charles Michael Smith.

Individuals elected to general

agencies by the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference were selected by the SEJ Nominations Committee from names submitted by the 15 annual conferences.

Conference delegations compiled the names based on criteria specified in the *Discipline*, including race, age, disabilities, and clergy and laypersons.

Each individual completed a form which included a biographical statement and, in order of preference, three agencies where the nominee would like to serve.

Serving on the SEJ Nominations Committee from the NC Conference were Beth Norris and Albert Shuler.

All nominated names in a jurisdiction formed a jurisdictional pool.

The pool is also used to select at-large agency members based on numbers from the General Conference Secretary using criteria specified in the *Discipline*.

Over 40 names were submitted from the NC Conference. General conference delegates were automatically placed in the pool.

Each of the five jurisdictions have a pool. One or more people selected

from the SEJ to serve on a general agency will work with other jurisdiction designees to elect at-large members with expertise and balance for each general agency. The number of at-large members per agency varies. The General Conference Secretary specifies the number.

The agency and names of individuals from the NC Conference that will assist in electing at-large agency members are: Discipleship, Robbie Lowry; Higher Education, Regina Henderson; Christian Unity, Edgardo Colon-Emeric, and Communications, Bill Norton.

## Older Adult Ministries: Living Life to the Fullest

The 2nd annual conference-wide Older Adult Event "Living Life to the Fullest" was held May 14th at Garner UMC.



More than 200 senior adults from throughout the conference gathered for workshops, fellowship and worship.

Participants attended workshops which included Nutrition, Exercise, Insurance Information, Starting & Energizing Senior Ministry, Coping with Loss, Seniors' Spiritual Journey and other topics. The day concluded with a worship service and communion led by the Rev. F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

## Celebrate Legacy Building Sunday September 14, 2008 at *your* church

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# Bishop Shamana rules California-Nevada statement on same-sex unions 'void'

By Marta W. Aldrich \*

(UMNS) - Retired UM clergy in northern California and Nevada could face disciplinary charges if they perform same-gender marriage ceremonies in the wake of a California court ruling that allows gay couples to marry, their bishop says.

While the church's California-Nevada legislative assembly approved a resolution in June commending retired clergy who have offered to perform such ceremonies, Bishop Beverly J. Shamana has issued a ruling declaring the statement "void and of no effect."

"While the resolution is a commendable gesture to the congregations of the conference in offering the pastoral counsel of a number of retired clergy to persons contemplating same-gender marriage under the laws of California, it steps over a disciplinary line when it commends these clergy to the congregations for the purpose of 'performing same gender marriages or holy unions,'" Shamana wrote in her ruling of law.

Meanwhile, an organizer of the

retired clergy said the bishop's ruling would not deter the pastors from performing the ceremonies.

"Nothing has changed by the bishop calling the resolution null and void," said the Rev. Don Fado, a retired UM pastor in Sacramento. "As far as we're concerned, we're available, and the conference knows we're available, and we've made our witness and will continue to do so."

## Ruling of law

The ruling of law was requested immediately after the church's California-Nevada Annual (regional) Conference approved the resolution on June 21.

Following the process defined in *The Book of Discipline*, the bishop's ruling was then sent to the United Methodist Judicial Council, the church's top court, which will review the matter at its October session.

Sixty-seven retired clergy signed on to offer their services under the original resolution. The list has since grown to 82, according to Fado.

The resolution lists the names of retired clergy wanting to participate

and states that the conference "commends its retired clergy for offering continued ministry and will communicate to its congregations the availability of the following retired pastors to perform same gender marriages or holy unions."

In her ruling, Shamana says the denomination's *Book of Discipline* declares that performing same-sex marriage ceremonies is a chargeable offense.

"It is not within the power or prerogative of an annual conference to offer the services of its clergy to perform acts which the General Conference has declared to be chargeable offenses against the law of The United Methodist Church," Shamana wrote.

The United Methodist Church, while affirming all people as persons "of sacred worth," considers the practice of homosexuality "incompatible with Christian teaching."

Its law book prohibits its pastors and churches from conducting ceremonies celebrating homosexual unions.

The denominational statements were affirmed in a split vote last spring by General Conference, the church's top legislative body that meets once every four years.

Retired pastor, the Rev. Ronald Greulich, who asked Shamana for the ruling of law, said he was pleased with the bishop's conclusion.

"The *Discipline* is very specific that United Methodist clergy are not to do gay and lesbian weddings and they're not to be held in the churches, and to do so is a chargeable offense," said Greulich.

He is writing a brief to submit to the Judicial Council in support of Shamana's ruling. "This is what our book of rules says, and if we're going to be United Methodists in covenant with one another, we should do what we promised to do when we were ordained, which is to support The United Methodist Church," he said.

## Making a statement

Fado said many retired clergy in California-Nevada actually have been "doing holy unions for three years"—under the radar. However, he said, they felt compelled to make a statement about their availability in the wake of last spring's ruling by the California Supreme Court, overturning a voter-approved ban on same-sex marriage.

The resolution "was a chance to make a witness on where we stand and give courage to pastors in the connection that we're willing to do it," Fado said. "... We're saying this is



Bishop Beverly Shamana presided June 19 over The United Methodist Church's California-Nevada Annual (regional) Conference in Sacramento, Calif. Delegates approved two measures that support same-gender couples entering into the marriage covenant. In May, California's high court overturned a voter-approved ban on same-sex marriage, making California and Massachusetts the only U.S. states to allow gay couples to marry. (UMNS photo by Paul Hilton)

an act of collegiality to be of support to pastors who feel for any reason they cannot perform the ceremony."

Fado said retired clergy listed in the resolution are among the leaders in the California-Nevada Conference, which includes northern California and the state of Nevada. They include 15 former district superintendents, 11 who have been delegates to General Conference and 10 who have served as conference staff.

The church's California-Pacific assembly also passed gay-friendly statements in June in southern California, after the state began issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples on June 16.

Some denominational leaders have subsequently expressed concern that the two conferences are on the verge of breaking a Scripturally based covenant with the rest of the 11.5 million-member denomination, as expressed through the *Book of Discipline* and actions of General Conference, which is the only body that can speak for the entire United Methodist Church.

They say the church's position is based on biblical teaching and Christian tradition, which they note is often at odds with popular culture.

At the church's Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference meeting in Harrisburg, Pa., delegates voted July 17 to support retired California-Nevada clergy who perform the marriage ceremonies.

The resolution also asks for lenient disciplinary action against clergy who disobey church law on the issue.

\* Marta Aldrich is news editor of United Methodist News Service.

## conference CALENDAR

For more information, visit [www.nccumc.org](http://www.nccumc.org) and click on "Calendar" at the top of the page.

### August

- 1 UMW Conference Standing Rules Committee at School of Christian Mission; 12pm
- 3-6 SEJ UMACBA; Lake Junaluska
- 7 Sanford District Set-up meeting, Carthage UMC 10am-1pm
- 11 New Bern District Set-up meeting, Ann Street UMC 10am-noon
- 13 Wilmington District Set-up meeting, Trinity Family Life Ctr, 10am
- 16 Committee Organizational meeting; Methodist University  
UMW Finance Committee; 10am; Newton Grove UMC
- 23 "Let the Children Come" children's ministry workshop; Page Memorial, Aberdeen, 9:45am-12:15pm

### September

- 5 UMW School of Christian Mission Committee Meeting; 7:30 pm; Dover UMC; Dover
- 6 Shepherding 21st Century Sheep; Cyberministry & Cybersafety; Haymount UMC, Fayetteville; 9:15 am-12:30 pm  
UMW Conference Executive Committee Meeting; 9:30 am; Dover UMC; Dover
- 11 The Task Force on Institutional Relations; 10 am; UM Building; Raleigh
- 19-21 UMW Mother Child Retreat
- 20 Shepherding 21st Century Sheep; Cyberministry & Cybersafety; White Plains UMC, Cary; 9:15am-12:30pm
- 27 Shepherding 21st Century Sheep; Cyberministry and Cybersafety; Wesley Memorial UMC; Wilmington; 9:15am to 12:30pm





By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

# September *adult* BIBLE STUDY

## September 7, 2008

**Text: Mark 1:1-8, Matthew 3:1-12**  
**"A New Community"**

Now you have to admit, this is a messy beginning. This entire quarter is going to be devoted to the New Testament community. But this is not the beginning I would choose.

Community is about relationships, friendships, loyalty to one another, covered dish suppers, and family reunions.

But that is not the way that this series begins.

It does not begin with the warmth of brotherhood and sisterhood. It begins with repentance. Messy.

Repentance. Many of us have learned that "repent" is a translation of a Greek word meaning "to turn around."

The Hebrew word translated "repent" refers to a change of mind or change of attitude.

The community that is made up of those who have repented is a community that is moving in a different direction than the world around it.

This new community does not hold the same values as the world around it. This new community does not march to the world's drumbeat. This new community lives with inclusion when the world speaks of exclusion.

This week's study texts introduce John the Baptizer as the prophet of repentance. (Remember that a prophet is not someone who predicts

but someone who speaks for God.)

He provides the context for the ministry of Jesus. In a sense, the community that formed around Jesus was a community rooted in repentance.

Those who followed Jesus went in a new direction. Love replaced hate. Service replaced selfishness. Justice replaced injustice. Freedom replaced captivity. Sight replaced blindness.

But what worth is love, service, justice, freedom, and sight if we still carry the load of our sin with us?

Mark answers that question. John the Baptizer preached repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Mark 1:4).

Repentance—our new direction—is possible because forgiveness has taken from our backs the burden of guilt. We are freed to walk with a new step, a lively step.

The new community is begun. It is a community of repentance. It is a community of forgiveness. It is a community of counter-cultural life. No wonder it is called "a new community."

### What Someone Else Has Said:

Roberta Bondi (*A Place to Pray*, Abingdon Press) quotes one of the desert fathers: "A soldier asked Abba Mius if God accepted repentance...He said, 'Tell me, my dear, if your cloak is torn, do you throw it away?' (The soldier) replied, 'No, I mend it and use it again.' The old man said to him, 'If you are so careful about your cloak, will not God be equally careful about (God's) creatures?'"

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Turn my heart, O God, so it faces the same direction as Your will..."

## September 14, 2008

**Text: Matthew 1:18-2:23**  
**"The Birth of a New Community"**

The year I got my "big boy" bicycle, it snowed. It snowed a lot. Deep. Under most circumstances, this heavy snow at Christmas time would be a delight, but for me, it was a disappointment.

I could not get outside to ride the bike. I was limited to carefully maneuvered trips from the dining room to the living room. The red Western Flyer was a great gift, but I hardly knew what to do with it.

That same feeling must have encircled the first Christmas.

Joseph learned that Mary was pregnant. He wonders, "What am I going to do about that?"

The couple shows up with no place to stay in Bethlehem. They wonder, "Where can we stay the night?"

The shepherds hear of a Messiah's birth. They wonder, "What does this mean? Let's go see!"

The magi see the powerful star in the east. Those around them wonder, "Where is he who is born King of the Jews?"

Herod begins to slaughter newborns. Mary and Joseph wonder, "Where can we go to be safe?"

That's the surrounding tone of the Christmas story. "I hardly knew what to do with it."

One might think that the birth of Jesus would send answers, wonderfully clear answers, but the biblical Christmas accounts seem to be filled with questions.

This leads me to think that perhaps the Church should present itself as a community where it is okay to ask questions. The community that

emerges with the birth of the Messiah is a community of questions.

The invitation to come to Christ is not an invitation to come once you have all the answers.

Come with your questions!

Come with your doubts!

Come as you are in order to become who you are called to be!

This new community that forms around Jesus takes shape as questions emerge. That is as true today as it was the days of his birth. It is an ongoing community.

Perhaps it is a good idea to be talking about Christmas during this fall season.

It is a good thing to reflect on this heart-of-the-matter story when our schedules and our minds are not diverted and dispersed by the busy pressures of December.

Besides, around here it is not likely to snow in September.

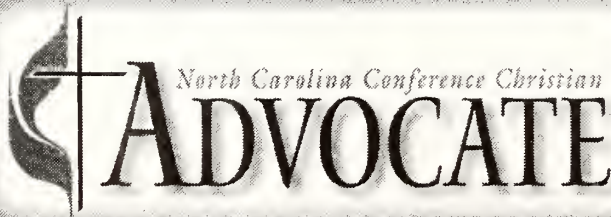
### What Someone Else Has Said: In

John Irving's *A Prayer for Owen Meany* (Morrow), the main character reflects: "Ever since the Christmas of '53 (when my mother died), I have felt that the yuletide is a special hell for those families who have suffered any loss or who must admit to any imperfection; the so-called spirit of giving can be as greedy as receiving—Christmas is our time to be aware of what we lack, of who's not home."

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Lord Jesus, I wonder..."

See "Bible study," page 14



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1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 calendar

ANNOUNCEMENTS

10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20

Upcoming events  
throughout the Conference

## Let the Children Come...

A resource event for adults in leadership of local church children's ministry (in particular small to medium size churches) will be offered on Saturday, Aug. 23 at Page Memorial UMC in Aberdeen.

Check-in begins at 9:45am and the workshops conclude at 12:15pm. There is no cost to the event and no need to pre-register.

After worship led by All God's Children UMC there will be four workshop offerings on the subjects of use of One Room curriculum, involving children in mission, selection and use of curriculum resources, and churches partnering with parents for children's faith formation.

More information about this workshop is available at [www.nccumc.org/childrnmin/children05.htm](http://www.nccumc.org/childrnmin/children05.htm).

## Applications available online for Youth Ministry Award

The Award of Excellence in Youth Ministry is presented at Pilgrimage each year. The application deadline is Aug. 31. The application is available at <http://www.nccumc.org/youthministry/awardexcellence.application.pdf>.

## Youth groups at Pilgrimage

Youth groups and individuals contribute to leadership at Pilgrimage in a variety of ways. The deadline to sign up for any of these opportunities is Aug. 31.

Individual youth may apply to be considered for the house band (auditions will be required and an audition date scheduled for early fall). To obtain the house band application, please request it via email to [senicholson@nccumc.org](mailto:senicholson@nccumc.org).

Youth groups may offer an act of worship during the sessions. Details about what act of worship would be offered should be emailed to [senicholson@nccumc.org](mailto:senicholson@nccumc.org). Groups may create a video of their group interpreting the Pilgrimage theme "Pass it On" and submit that to Youth Ministry, PO Box 10955, Raleigh, NC 27605. Youth groups may also create a portion of the stage visuals - any youth groups desiring to be part of this project should contact Sue Ellen Nicholson at the Methodist Building as soon as possible for details.

## Spanish Immersion opportunity available through UMVIM

NC Volunteers In Mission is sponsoring a two-week Spanish Immersion program in Guatemala during November 2008 and is looking for people to join the group.

Any level of Spanish, from beginner to advanced, can be accommodated.

Cost is \$600 plus airfare and includes lessons, room & board, in-country travel, and insurance. For more information, visit the website at [www.spanishimmersionprogram.embarqspace.com](http://www.spanishimmersionprogram.embarqspace.com).

## Support DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministries in August

A special offering for Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries will be received in the churches of the Western North Carolina Conference and the North Carolina Conference on Aug. 24.

Offering envelopes are available in district offices.

A promotional DVD will be available for use on DBOM Sunday from the district offices beginning Aug. 1.

For additional information or offering envelopes call 336-454-5348 or e-mail [MCHicks@northstate.net](mailto:MCHicks@northstate.net).

## Iowa workteams forming for Sept.

MERCI is putting together recovery teams for Cedar Rapids Iowa for Sept. 7-13 and Sept. 14-20. Teams for September must be signed up by Aug. 15. Travel arrangements will be made considering skills and needs of the team members. The teams will be doing demolition and reconstruction work.


Teams will be called to MERCI for brief training and team building before leaving for Iowa. Training dates will be provided at a later time.

Individuals or congregations interested should contact Ann Huffman or Jim Huskins at MERCI 888-440-9167. See <http://www.merciumc.org/default.htm> for more information.

## "Welcoming the Sojourner" learning event to be in September

A learning event on immigration will be held Sept. 11-13, at Hendrix College in Conway, AR. Co-sponsored by the Arkansas Board of Church and Society, Arkansas Justice for Our Neighbors, and the General Board of Church and Society, "Welcoming the Sojourner" will respond to the immigration debate from a Biblical faith perspective. For details go to [www.umc-gbcs.org](http://www.umc-gbcs.org) and select the Calendar section. The Welcoming the Sojourner entry is under the "Programs and Conferences" heading. Click on "more..." for details and registration.

Echoes of Faith:  
The Psalms



Presented  
by

Dr. Evelyn Laycock

at

Epworth By The Sea

St. Simons Island, Georgia

October 13 – 16, 2008

"The book of Psalms is a compilation of writings covering over a thousand year period of time. They are the expressions of many hearts, the thoughts of many minds, often written in times of great distress as well as on the pinnacle of joy. To read the Psalms one realizes they are as relevant today as they were on the day of writing for they deal with the "stuff" out of which life is made." Dr. Laycock

Come study the book of Psalms and learn from this noted Bible teacher who has served for 35 years as Professor of Religion at Hiwassee College. Dr. Laycock holds both Masters of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees from Emory University.

This event has been approved for 1.3 hours of continuing education credit for clergy.

View accommodations and register online at

[www.epworthbythesea.org](http://www.epworthbythesea.org)

or call 912-638-8688



# September adult Bible study *continued from page 12*

**September 21, 2008**

**Text: Matthew 5:1-7:28**

**"Core Values of the New Community"**

This week's study text presents an unusual problem: familiarity.

It is one thing to encounter a difficult and obscure passage of Scripture; we expect it to be tough to digest.

But here is the opposite concern: this lesson (the Beatitudes) is so much a part of our biblical vocabulary that we suspect there is nothing new here.

Not so! It is a bit arrogant of us to think that there will be nothing new when we come to a well-known text.

Has God been exhausted in what God might reveal to us?

The mystery of God's unfolding revelation exceeds far more than we can find in one visit, two visits, three visits, five-hundred visits to the Word.

In the Bible I have in front of me, there is a lot of red ink on the pages of this week's background text (Matthew 5:1-7:28). This edition puts the

words of Jesus in red.

We are in the midst of several portions of the teachings of Jesus.

He is, in a sense, defining the new community that will follow him. What a range of topics! Law and prophets (5:17-20). Anger (5:21-26). Adultery (5:27-30). Divorce (5:31-32). Oath-taking (5:33-37). Retaliation (5:38-42). Love of enemies (5:43-48). Almsgiving (6:1-4). Prayer (6:5-15). Fasting (6:16-18). On and on.

And when it is all over, the Bible says the crowds were "astounded at his teaching" (Matthew 7:28).

Astounded. Perhaps, if we are no longer astounded by the teachings of Jesus, we have let their sharp edges get rubbed off.

Perhaps, if we are no longer astounded by the teachings of Jesus, we have decided that he didn't really mean it.

Perhaps, if we are no longer astounded by the teachings of Jesus, we have decided to pick out those that make sense and leave out those they do not make sense to us.

*Astounded* (New Revised Standard Version). *Astonished* (King James Version). *Filled with amazement* (Twentieth Century New Testament). *Stunned* (New Testament According to Eastern Texts). *Simply amazed* (Cotton Patch Version). *Never heard teaching like this* (The Message).

How many ways are there to say it?

If our values are not transformed by this week's lesson, we have to wonder what has happened to our astonishment, our surprise, our shock at what Jesus is calling us to be and to do.

**What Someone Else Has Said:**

Ronald Stone (*John Wesley's Life and Ethics*, Abingdon Press) notes that for Wesley, the Sermon on the Mount "was God's teaching through Jesus on a mountain expounding the evangelical way of life."

**Prayer:**

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Surprise me, Lord..."

**September 28, 2008**

**Text: Matthew 20:1-28**

**"Creating a Community of Servants"**

Jesus has called us to be a community of servants (Matthew 20:27).

And servanthood is the life Jesus modeled for us (Matthew 20:28). The word translated "servant" (*doulon*) comes from a word that means "to bind."

Have mercy! I thought Jesus was all about freedom, being put at liberty, set free. What is this call to be bound, to be a servant?

There is a prayer that includes the phrase "in whose service is perfect freedom."

There is a hymn that reminds us "Make me a captive, Lord, and then I shall be free."

What strange talk this is! To be made free, we have to be bound.

Most of us are bound already.

One might be bound to visions of success. Another is bound to the pursuit of wealth. Others are bound to sexual pleasure, political power, places of prestige, or image-building.

Some are bound to low self-esteem. Some are bound to busy-ness. Some are bound to pious prosperity.

Such bindings as these prevent us from being set free.

Being bound to Jesus Christ binds us to all those for whom he died. That's a pretty tall order!

But when we are bound to Christ, his power becomes our power; his vision becomes our vision; his will becomes our will; his victory becomes our victory.

Being a servant of Christ is to be bound both to his crucifixion and to his resurrection.

He asked "Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink" (Matthew 20:22)?

Are you able to be bound to my values? Are you able to be bound to my destiny? Are you able to cast your lot fully with me?

If so, you can be great. The strange route to greatness is not to seek it.

We are not invited to greatness in order to be honored; we are invited to greatness in order to serve.

Does this all seem counter-cultural? Well, it is. That is why the community of the followers of Jesus is a new kind of community.

That is why the Church at its best does not look like the world around it.

That is why we serve others.

**What Someone Else Has Said:**

Bishop William R. Cannon (*Jesus, the Servant, The Upper Room*) wrote "(The Bible) presents Jesus as a servant. His activism is selfless, and everything he does is for the betterment of others. The church needs to consider afresh her own form of activism, and test it against the self-sacrifice of Jesus."

**Prayer:**

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of the new community, thank you for calling us to this family of service; thank you for equipping us for service; thank you for binding us to your Son, Jesus Christ. Thank you for giving us the freedom that comes from the great Liberator. Thank you for the freedom that comes from serving in the spirit of the Master..."

## CLASSIFIEDS

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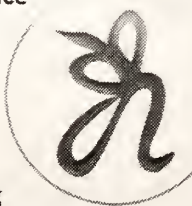
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## DEATHS

**DODSON, Mrs. Georgia**, widow of the Rev. Samuel G. Dodson, Jr., died June 17 in Asheboro. A graveside service was held June 19 in Charlotte.

**AUMAN, James A.**, died June 28. A celebration of his life was held at Mt. Pleasant UMC in Greensboro on June 29.

**KINLEY, Grady**, died June 30. The funeral service was held July 3 in Goldsboro and a burial service was held at Hebron UMC in Mebane.

**BUTSON, Shari**, wife of John Butson (NB: Asbury) died July 1. A celebration of her life was held July 3 at Asbury UMC. A service of interment was held in Maryland.

**FAIRCLOTH, Doris**, wife of Robert Faircloth (FA: Johnson Memorial) died July 1. The funeral service was held at Johnson Memorial UMC on July 3.



# around the CONFERENCE

Leaders and participants of the Beach Party VBS spent a week celebrating and learning about Jesus. The VBS brought together United Methodists from North and South Carolina. A highlight of the week was singing with "Fairley and the Guestettes."



## NC & SC United Methodists brought together for Hickory Grove VBS

Hickory Grove UMC of Clio, SC, opened their doors and hearts and had a wonderful "Beach Party Vacation Bible School" on June 15-19, under the direction of Nancy Shelley, and others from First UMC, in Laurinburg. Each year folks from Hickory Grove, Fairview, First UMC and other churches gather together to spend a week celebrating the joy of learning

about Jesus, singing, doing crafts, and eating supper together.

Special thanks go to Nancy and Marvin Shelley, Bruce, Lynnette, and Taylor Bisbee, Sarah Fletcher, Fairley Guest, Gerry Johnson, Janna and Sally Wegner, Verne and Leslie Womack for giving of their time and energy and sharing their love of Jesus with others.



### Parkwood UMC, — VBS in Outer Space

When Mars needs missionaries, the United Methodist Church will be ready to send them. Parkwood UMC's "Cosmic City" VBS had a space theme this year. Pastor Bob Kretzu built a spaceship to inspire young astronauts.

## Swansboro UMC — 2008 Scholarship Recipients Named

Each year the Swansboro United Methodist Men offer \$500 scholarships to each applicant/High School graduate who has been an active member of Swansboro UMC and will be a full-time college student in the upcoming school year. The 2008 scholarship recipients and their colleges

of choice are (L-R): Tyler Roberts - NC State University, Dennis Parker Barham - UNC Chapel Hill, Robert Glover - East Carolina University, Mallori Guthrie - Coastal Carolina Community College, Ben Yates - Coastal Carolina Community College, and T. J. Scholl - UNC Chapel Hill (not pictured). The guest speaker for the evening was J. Sharpe Williams, UNC Wilmington, one of last year's scholarship recipients. The Swansboro UMM raise funds to support this and many other missions by cooking and selling their oil-roasted, lightly-salted gourmet peanuts.



## Morris Chapel UMC — Celebrates 101st Birthday of Mrs. Elizabeth Wicker Calcutt

Longtime member Mrs. Elizabeth Wicker ("Mrs. Tib") Calcutt celebrated her 101st birthday on Sunday, June 22. "Mrs Tib" was serenaded by a congregational rendition of "Happy Birthday" during the worship service at Morris Chapel UMC (Sanford District) on the morning of her birthday. She was also honored with a birthday supper the day before in the church fellowship hall.



## New Hope UMC — Celebrating Pastor's First Year of Service

At New Hope UMC in Hertford, the congregation gathered as they normally do for Sunday Services on June 29. This day was special and a time for celebration as Pastor Bill Masciangelo on this day completed one year in ministry as pastor. As the time for worship service drew near, Pastor Bill was nowhere to be found. At the church hour, the church bell began to ring, and the congregation was asked to go outside and welcome the speaker of the day. Coming across the church lawn they saw a Circuit Rider riding his horse, dressed in costume, and wearing a white wig.

After services Pastor Bill Masciangelo was asked why he decided to celebrate one year with New Hope a Circuit Rider. Pastor Bill said this was his "...way of letting the congregation know that I'm grateful to the people of New Hope UMC who like the Circuit Riders of old put faith in action to help the community and this congregation. I'm also grateful for the opportunity that God has given me to serve the New Hope community."

### Submitting Around the Conference Information

Items for consideration can be emailed to [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org). The deadline is the 5th day of the month prior to publication. All articles and photos are subject to editing. Photographs or art should

be recorded in the largest size and highest resolution possible. Send in JPG or TIFF formats. Please send articles and photos in separate files. Photos should not be embedded in articles or in photo viewing programs.



## Cook receives stole of Marjorie Matthews — first female UM bishop in the US

Not many clergy have the opportunity to wear a stole first worn by a bishop but the Rev. Teresa Cook, associate at Pine Valley UMC in Wilmington, can wear one when the time is appropriate.



Bishop Marjorie Matthews

Cook has received the ordination stole worn by of the first female bishop in The United Methodist Church, the late Bishop Marjorie Matthews. Bishop Matthews was consecrated a bishop in 1980 at the age of 64. She retired in 1984.

Barbara Isham made the stole for her aunt, Bishop Matthews, and presented it to Cook on May 10. Isham made the stole by hand for her aunt's ordination because she was too short to wear the stoles made for men.

Isham read about Cook in the local Wilmington newspaper which identified her as the first African-American pastor at Pine Valley, an all-white congregation.

Isham said she thought it was appropriate to give Cook her aunt's stole because she believes Cook will go through a lot as a 26-year-old who is the first

African-American pastor at Pine Valley. She said her aunt suffered persecution as the first female bishop and saw a connection to Cook, the youngest person of color serving as a pastor in the NC Conference.

Cook is a licensed local pastor working toward ordination as an Elder. In The United Methodist Church, only elders can wear a stole. The stole serves as a symbol of the obedience of pastors to the call of Christ.

"I believe that when I received the stole, God confirmed my call to minister in my cross-racial appointment and in The United Methodist Church," Cook said.



RIGHT: Teresa Cook holds the ordination stole of the late Marjorie Matthews, first female bishop. Matthews' niece, Barbara Isham made the stole for Matthews because she was too short to wear those made for men. Isham chose to give Cook the stole after reading an article about her pastoral ministry at Pine Valley UMC in Wilmington.



Using a number of scriptures to accompany her drawing, Cheryl Epperson linked the concept of liberty (embodied in the iconic statue) to the heritage of Americans and as Christians.

She used the illustration of a student in one of her classes for Coastal Carolina Community College who was in the high school next to the World Trade Center when the buildings were attacked in 2001.

The student was so moved by what he saw that day that he joined the Marines in order to protect the liberty of all Americans.

She reminded the audience of God's promise to Solomon at the dedication of the Temple in II Chronicles 7:14, "If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." In a time of crisis, challenge, and difficulty, she said that as the nation would do well to heed those words.

In addition, Epperson told the audience that the purpose of liberty was not to have freedom from responsibility but freedom to love one another as God loves. Finally, she recalled the poetic words of Emma Lazarus that are inscribed inside the base of the Statue of Liberty,

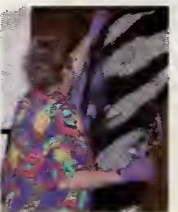
*"...Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"*

Epperson was inspired to learn about the "chalk talk" format after meeting Dan Ondra, an internationally known chalk artist and teacher. She then attended a number of trainings in order to apply her skills to large-format (36 x 48') drawings and began drawing for church and school functions.

Licensed as a local pastor by the Texas Annual Conference in 2000 and the NC Annual Conference in 2004, Epperson has served churches in the Houston area and in eastern NC.

She has done "chalk talks" for church groups in Morehead City, Jacksonville, Richlands, Rose Hill, and Swansboro as well as a "chalk talk" for a UM Women's gathering in Fayetteville.

Cheryl is currently an adjunct English instructor for Coastal Carolina Community College at the main campus in Jacksonville and at their Camp Lejeune satellite campus.



Cheryl Epperson creates artwork using chalk as part of her presentation on the concept of liberty.

## Mission Opportunities

### MERCI needs flood buckets for the Midwest

The MERCI Mission Center, Goldsboro has received word that the Iowa conference is seeking help and has places for volunteers to reside. MERCI requests flood buckets, supplies for buckets or money (\$54) for the supplies or shipping.

Persons interested in volunteering for work in Iowa should contact Ann Huffman at MERCI, 888-440-9167 so that travel can be arranged in

the most economical way.

Each NC Conference district disaster response committee member should establish a central collection point in their district to collect flood supplies. MERCI will arrange a pick up of flood bucket supplies if districts are unable to deliver the materials to MERCI. For more information on the contents of a flood bucket, please see <http://www.merciumc.org/disasterkits.htm>.

### Robeson County Church and Community Center asks for support

The Robeson County Church and Community Center, serving the most impoverished county in NC desperately needs financial support. Grant funding is down and the needs of the community are up.

During the first five months of 2008, they served 1068 families with food. Last fiscal year a total of 1017 were served for the entire year.

To deal with its financial problems, the Center has closed its literacy program and reduced the

staff, over the past two years, from 17 in 2005, to six full time and six part time people today.

Donations can be made through local church offerings. Please note on the check: Robeson County Church and Community Center - Advance #791742 or mail the check directly to the Church and Community Center at 600 West 5th Street, Lumberton, NC 28358. For more information, call 910-738-5204 or email [rcccdir@ncrrbiz.com](mailto:rcccdir@ncrrbiz.com).





## Design of head- quarters begins, first Raleigh property sold

The project to relocate the United Methodist Building, as approved at North Carolina Annual Conference, is underway.

**NCC  
BUILDS**

The sale of the building at 1307 Glenwood

Avenue and the approximate 3.5 acres of land on which it sits was completed on Aug. 13. The Conference is now leasing back the conference office space for a period of up to 2.5 years while the new headquarters building is under construction east of Garner.

The next step in the sale of the adjoining property will be the legal requirements and paperwork for the second closing. This includes approximately 2.5 acres of land at 519 Wade Avenue, currently leased to Raleigh Towne Associates, LLC on a 50 year ground lease that will expire in 2014.

"The sale of this property will be subject to assumption of the existing ground lease by the new owners," said Cashar Evans, conference trustee chair.

"The Board of Trustees has been working diligently since June to begin

See "NCC Builds," page 5



Conference youth officers elected in July were (L-R): Jon Pritchard, treasurer; James Van Staaldunin, president; Ally Soukup, secretary; Ben Lord, legislative affairs person; and Murphy Carroll, vice-president.

## Resolutions adopted and leadership elected during Annual Conference Session for Youth

By Sue Ellen Nicholson \*

"Who Are You?" was the theme for the week as the NC Conference United Methodist Youth Fellowship gathered July 21-26 for their Annual Conference Session (ACS) at Methodist University.

Included in the week's schedule were times of worship, small group gatherings for spiritual growth, interest group meetings on a variety

of topics, legislative affairs sessions, and selection of leadership for the 2008-09 Conference year.

Evening programs included group-building activities and an ice cream social, simulation exercises and presentations on faith in the public sphere, a dance, and a talent show.

One highlight of worship included singing the Covenant Prayer hymn written for ACS by Jay Locklear (St. Luke UMC-Sanford) and the Rev.

Adam Seate (St. Luke UMC-Goldsboro) with lyrics based on the Wesleyan Covenant Prayer.

A motion was made and supported at the conclusion of ACS to submit the Covenant Prayer hymn to the general church for consideration in the new hymnal being developed.

In legislative affairs sessions, the youth dealt with resolutions on a variety of subjects such as: Social Security, Haley's Act, plastic shopping bags, non-violence and a US Department of Peace, Tibet, the Social Principles of the UMC, and physician involvement in lethal injection.

They also dealt with: NC racial justice act, network neutrality, a local Abrahamic dialogue, global positioning system monitoring of sex offenders, cyber-bullying, oil prices, mandatory recycling, peacekeeping and justice efforts in Darfur, a global warming cap and trade bill, and direct-to-consumer advertising.

The Conference Youth Officers elected for the 2008-2009 year were President - James Van Staaldunin from Salem UMC, Greenville; Vice President - Murphy Carroll from Acts UMC, Apex; Secretary - Ally Soukup from Northwoods UMC, Jacksonville; Treasurer - Jon Pritchard from Cedar Cliff UMC, Graham; and Legislative Affairs Person - Ben Lord from Louisburg UMC.

See "ACS for Youth," page 5

## Conference leadership gathers for quadrennial meeting

By Para Drake \*

"We're excited . . . and truly believe God has equipped us with you . . . a vital, indispensable part of doing what we have been called to do," said Bishop Alfred Wesley Gwinn, Jr. to conference leaders at Methodist University in Fayetteville on Aug. 16.

Members of most conference committees and commissions met for the quadrennial orientation and organizational meeting.

Gwinn, the Rev. Carol Goehring, executive director of connectional ministries; Emily Innes, conference lay leader; and Chris-

tine Dodson, conference treasurer, articulated ministry vision and unveiled guidelines and new requirements to be met by each committee.

Referring to Joshua 14 and Nehemiah 4:6, Gwinn related his prayer to be in ministry with those who, like Caleb, are willing to struggle for the mountain.

He turned to Nehemiah 4:6, recalling that the wall rebuilt for Jerusalem was increased in height by half because "the people had a mind to work."

Gwinn pleaded that the gifts of

See "Conference Leadership," page 3



## Rockingham Youth Leadership Academy visits state legislature

This summer, State House of Representative Garland E. Pierce (D-Scotland) invited participants in the Rockingham District Partners In Ministry (RDPIM) Youth Leadership Academy to spend a day in Raleigh attending committee meetings and legislative sessions along with other youth delegates and representatives from several NC counties.

"I had a very informative meeting with the student leaders, and I am excited that they will be participating in the Academy for two years. I know they will do well and work hard to stay abreast and achieve their set goals. This is an excellent opportunity for the students to interact with their peers and learn what they are doing in other counties. I am willing to assist and help them in any way I can to complete this worthy opportunity," said Rep. Pierce.

The eight-week summer leadership academy was held on Richmond Community College/Scotland Extension Campus, located in Scotland County. It is one component of the

"Youth Empowered to Succeed" (YES) ministry sponsored by RDPIM which serves Richmond, Scotland, and Robeson Counties.

The leadership and mentoring programs within the YES ministry were developed to reach and transform lives of the new generation of children and youth through service-learning initiatives.

Weekly activities at the academy included team-building, a games and ropes confidence course, an exploration of spiritual gifts and talents, time management training, and self esteem and goal setting exercises.

The youth also learned more about problem solving, decision-making, conflict management, public policy, political processes and small business ventures.

Participants attended county commissioner meetings, town council



Participants in the Youth Leadership Academy from the Rockingham District visited the NC State House of Representatives this summer. Front Row (L-R): Representative Garland E. Pierce, Ashley Covington, Anetra Alford, Courtney McLaughlin, and Speaker Joe Hackney; Second Row (L-R): —LeAnne Madden, Sky Locklear, Devon Torrey, and Angela Mitchell; Back Row: Shawn Mitchell.

meetings, UM District Superintendent's pastors meetings, district connectional table meetings, etc. to observe planning and decision-making processes.

The youth leadership development ministry also includes school-year programs and is offered for rising high school juniors. It includes internship and work experience completed over two years.

The youth participating in the YES leadership development program receive entrepreneurship training and engage in community service projects to benefit themselves as well as the communities in the district.

Participants have formed a youth council and are beginning to undertake community service projects such as helping renovate substandard homes, planning and developing the mentoring component of the YES ministry planning, and developing and maintaining a district Resources and Referral Center.

To support the Resources and Referral Center, the youth are conducting research regarding the district's economic dilemma to help them make informed decisions about how best to address issues that plague

the communities.

Each week, participants visit a different community, "mapping" the capacities of neighborhoods to ascertain key assets and resources in the community.

Youth are compiling a Community Resource Directory for the community. Resources will include social services, local individuals, associations, and organizations.

The youth will also use this information to complete district web pages, video, and brochures to improve network and communications in the district.

To that end, youth are currently learning about Web site creation and plan to offer assistance to local churches in the Rockingham District needing a Web site.

Recently the youth visited the United Methodist Building in Raleigh and talked with Douglas Ward, IT director, and Linda Smith, webmaster, about how they can partner with the conference to provide Web sites for local churches.

For more information on RDPIM programs, contact Melba McCallum, director, at 910-276-6641 or email: mdgmccallum@yahoo.com.



### Our Church: An Artful Experience?

A liturgical arts seminar featuring  
**Catherine Kapikian,**

Director of The Henry Luce III Center for the Arts & Religion  
Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, D.C.

#### Workshop Presenters:

\*Rev. Sonny Mason

\*Rev. Dr. Ann Laird Jones

\*Rev. Mary Callaway Logan

\*St. Simons Island UMC Worship Committee

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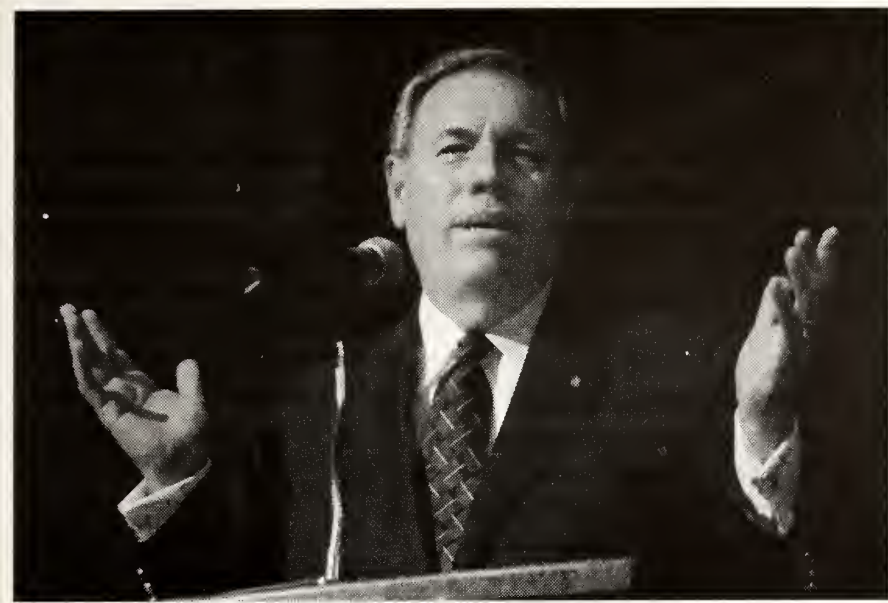
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(L-R) Melba McCallum, director of the RDPIM; Shawn Mitchell of Galilee UMC and volunteer with RDPIM, and RDPIM participants talk with (right side) Douglas Ward, conference IT director, and Linda Smith, conference webmaster, about Web site support for local churches. (Photo by Bill Norton)





Bishop Al Gwinn addresses NC Conference committee and commission leadership at a gathering held in August. Such an event takes place once every four years.

## Conference leadership gathers *continued from page 1*

the Spirit "exist to their full measure. And in this world the haves share freely with the have-nots, where justice reigns supreme. And this planet is thought of as a treasure."

"This is God's heart," Gwinn said, "...and God yearns for it to happen, and God wants you and me to yearn for it to become reality."

As "disciples making disciples for Jesus," the mission is to reproduce, multiply, and build up because, as he anticipated, "We long to honor God and offer ourselves as vessels for bringing in God's kingdom."

John Wesley's Restrictive Rules, revised, ("Do no harm; do good; stay in love with God") define how to live God's vision and mission. The Seven Pathways of the Council of Bishops focus energy in disciple-making.

Conference emphasis on effective clergy and healthy congregations will enable growth and celebration of Acts 2 churches. Summing the vision and the mission, Gwinn noted, "...all tables will move together with Seven Pathways."

Innes recapped the Conference Vision Statement, Seven Pathways, and conference structure approved at Annual Conference in June.

Goehring focused on the core values and the goals for each of the ministry teams' quarterly meetings, emphasizing that accountability at the Connectional Table makes conference leadership "stewards of the vision."

Dodson presented the Connectional Table covenants for attendance, stewardship, and conflicts of interest. Members of conference leadership groups are expected to attend scheduled meetings and be fully prepared to participate. Two absences with appropriate notice may be excused.

When meals are served, participants will find healthful selections. While travel is provided, Dodson

noted, options for off-site meetings are encouraged, including the use of phone and Internet connection.

The "Conflict of Interest Policy," which each member was asked to sign, ensures that leadership action appropriately places conference well-being ahead of any personal considerations.

Gwinn's final presentation came from the Annual Conference presentation by Dr. Leonard Sweet which addressed the challenges for the church to reach new generations.

According to Sweet, culture has been moving from the emphasis on the left-brain style of thought into the more image-rich right-brain style of thought. The "Karaoke culture is getting more karaoke" not less. To communicate today, images, not words, are necessary.

Sweet noted, church people are very hardworking, yet less effective in reaching others. To be missional, relational and incarnational, the church has to preach and live the message: "come to Christ" not: "come to church." The church's point is not to transform culture; the church is meant to transform lives.

During the closing presentation, Gwinn asked, "What must I not forget from what I've heard?"

Each presenter, describing a changing operating system for conference ministry teams, articulated themes of right use of resources of all kinds and building relationships among ministry areas, interfaced by communications.

This focus on effectiveness and teamwork centers on inspiring "disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

\* Para Drake is pastor of Core Creek UMC and an adjunct writer/former member the NCCC Advocate group.

## Officers elected for conference committees and commissions

Most conference committees and commissions elected officers as part of the quadrennial leadership orientation and organizational meeting Aug. 16 at Methodist University in Fayetteville.

Some groups, because of disciplinary requirements, elected officers before the meeting. Other groups will elect officers at a later meeting.

Following, by committee or commission, are the list of officers available at this *Advocate* issue deadline:

### Children's Ministry

Chairperson, Amy Staley; Vice Chairperson, Robin Marley; Secretary, Brenda Brown

### Church & Society

Chairperson, Rev. Brian Wingo; Vice Chairperson, Jesse Staton; Secretary, Eric Lindblade

### Christian Unity & Interreligious Concerns

Chairperson, Edgar DeJesus; Vice Chairperson, W. Bryan Faggart; Secretary, Jerry M. Schronce

### Criminal Justice and Mercy Ministries

Chairperson, Carolyn Cummings-

Worix; Vice Chairperson, Gary C. Murphree; Secretary, Jimmie Modlin

### Communications

Chairperson, Taylor Mills; Vice Chairperson, Joe Parker; Secretary, Paul Dunham

### Congregational Development

Chairperson, Gary Allred; Vice Chairperson, Carlin Johnson; Secretary, Tom Newman

### Conference Staff Relations

Chairperson, Marty Hunicutt; Vice Chairperson, Jerline C. Miller; Secretary, Lou Davis

### Disaster Response

Chairperson, Bud Buzinski; Vice Chairperson, Cliff Harvell; Secretary, Rick Moser

### Disability Concerns

Chairperson, Hope Vickers; Vice Chairperson, Ken Ripley; Secretary, Louisa Locklear

### Equitable Compensation

Chairperson, Para Drake; Vice Chairperson, Ann Faust; Secretary, Vermel Taylor

See "Officers elected," page 5

## Methodist Scholarships

Recognizing our heritage as a Methodist affiliated college, Greensboro College offers a generous scholarship program for United Methodist students. (Students may only be chosen for one).

Kingswood Scholars \$12,500

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# Where we have been, and where we are going?

## Reflections on the NC Conference from 2004-2008

*The following is commentary written through the eyes of the NC Conference Lay Leader to summarize the visioning process of the North Carolina Conference during the 2004-08 quadrennium and moving toward the future.*

By Emily Innes \*

During the last quadrennium, the Conference Connectional Table (CCT) has been in a time of visioning, discernment, and discovery.

At times it has been a difficult process, and at times it has been exciting beyond measure.

However, one thing is for sure—the Holy Spirit has been at work.

### Visioning

Bishop Al Gwinn came to us the very first day, casting a vision, painting a picture of what the future could look like in the North Carolina Annual Conference if we were able to focus our vision and mission, let go of silos and territories, trust each other, and strive for excellence—both laity and clergy in partnership together.

Nearly four years ago, we took as our vision/mission statement—“Healthy congregations and effective leaders in every place making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

We knew then, that to cast this vision so that every clergy person and congregation could come on board, we would need tools and resources and ways to guide and equip.

### Moving into the Vision

The Bishop's first task force was “clergy effectiveness” (made up of clergy and laity from the Cabinet and Conference Board of Laity).

The Clergy Effectiveness Task Force brought forth a plan to help interpret this part of the vision.

Bishop Gwinn, the Conference Lay Leader, the Assistant to the Bishop, District Superintendents, District Lay Leaders, and members of the Board of Ordained Ministries went to each district.

At a series of meetings, they spread this vision, answered questions, alleviated anxiety where it existed, and let the laity know that tools and resources were on the way for the next “piece” of our shared vision—Healthy Congregations.

At that time the Bishop had already put into place the Healthy Congregations Task Force.

The work of that group produced a Bible Study, an Overview Booklet, an Assessment Tool, and a Ministry Action Plan.

### Budgeting

#### Toward the Vision

Also at this time, the Connectional Table hosted a Budget Summit meeting where we began to explore and understand the concept of zero-based budgeting for our conference boards and agencies.

We also brought forth the Council of Bishops' “Seven Pathways of Min-

istry” to bring focus to our work.

### Prioritizing

#### Toward the Vision

The Conference Connectional Table took these “Seven Pathways” and began to work through our Circles of Ministry to prioritize what we believed God was calling us to do.

That year at Annual Conference, new guidelines were approved that would make a way for ministry and money to be brought together to the same table.

The Conference Council on Finance and Administration (CF&A) would set the budget amount, and the Conference Connectional Table (CCT) would prioritize, based on the “Seven Pathways” and our vision/mission statement.

From the very start, the CCT/CF&A relationship worked very well.

### Empowering Congregations

#### Toward the Vision

The CCT knew, that if we were to fulfill the mission of “making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world,” we would need to empower the local church in ways we had never done before, because after all, the local church is the primary place where disciples are made, the place where people are brought into the body of Christ.

Yet in that particular year, we had 350 churches in the NC Annual Conference who did not have one single

profession of faith. We knew we had to do more.

When the CCT looked at our ministry from the perspective of “zero-based budgeting” we found what we already knew to be true—some items in the budget (such as pensions and benefits) were a huge part of where the money was going.

We started to ask the question: How do we help the conference exist to empower the local church, rather than having the local church simply support the conference?

Other large budget items such as institutional support gave us pause to consider the possibility that there might be other ways as a conference family to partner with our institutions rather than strictly budgetary.

An ongoing task force is exploring all of these possibilities for how we might give the local church opportunity to be in closer relationship and mission with our institutions.

### Evaluation

Another process in the work of CCT has been evaluation. We have found that some of our programs perhaps do not have measurable results.

Are events sponsored by our conference budget—specifically our boards and agencies—producing measurable results in the local church?

These are the kind of questions we are asking ourselves.

### Conference Structure Changes

The CCT's latest work has been slight changes to our Conference structure.

We know that changing the structure will not solve any problems, but we did want to simplify the language and create compact teams of people moving out to empower the local church with an expanded focus on technology and communications.

### Moving Forward with the Vision

Now we are beginning a new quadrennium. Conference leadership has been put into place through a new nominations process.

We look forward to Bishop Gwinn's continued leadership among us and to living into the vision and mission to which God has called us—

*“Healthy Congregations and Effective Leaders in every place making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”*

\* Emily Innes is serving her second four-year term as NC Conference lay leader and is chair of the Conference Connectional Table.



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Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

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Advocate Advisory Committee, or the  
North Carolina Conference.

## New Christian study guide available on Darfur crisis

UMNS — A biblically-based study, developed to accompany a best-selling book on the crisis in Darfur, is available to help the Christian community mobilize against atrocities in Sudan.

*Not on Our Watch Christian Companion: Biblical Reflections on the Mission to End Genocide in Darfur and Beyond* is an eight-week study written by Bill Mefford, director of civil and human rights for the UM Board of Church and Society, and Greg Leffel, president of One Horizon Foundation.

Copies can be ordered through the Web site [www.darfurchristianaction.org](http://www.darfurchristianaction.org).



## ACS for Youth *from page 1*

Selected to serve on the Conference Youth Committee along with the officers were Members at Large: Hannah Bingham, Rockingham District; Joel Denny, Wilmington District; Will Farnell, Goldsboro District; Jillian Hines, Burlington District; Altmann Lowry, Sanford District; Shawn Owens, Fayetteville District; and CJ Pearce, Durham District.

Designated Observers are: Jacob Cobb and Adam Fogleman, Sanford District; Leah Cribb, Elizabeth City District; Hannah McMillan, Rocky Mount District; and Jerome Purdie, Rockingham District.

The four Junior High Representatives to the Conference Youth Committee (elected by middle school youth at Kaleidoscope and Breakaway prior to ACS) are Ellie Cain and Jeremy Gage, Raleigh

District; Mary Warren Dickens, Rocky Mount District and Peter Norwood, Burlington District.

The staff for ACS included clergy and laity volunteers from across the conference. The Rev. Tim Reaves, Bladen Charge, served as the preacher/worship resource person for the week.

ACS is held each year in July at Methodist University in Fayetteville for UM Youth in high school (completed grades 9, 10, 11 or 12).

More information about ACS and other Conference youth ministry opportunities is available from the Office of Youth Ministries Web site at [www.nccumc.org/youthministry](http://www.nccumc.org/youthministry).

*\* Sue Ellen Nicholson is director of NC Conference Children, Youth and Young Adult Ministries.*

## NCC Builds *continued from page 1*

the programming and design phase of this new project.

Comments and suggestions have been received from all over the annual conference and are being used by the design team during this important first step," Evans said.

The Board of Trustees has selected several groups to assist with the project including Grubb & Ellis|Thomas Linderman Graham as the development consultants, HagerSmith Design, PA, as the architect and Centurion, Inc., as the construction contractor.

Evans was present along with Wilson Hayman, conference chancellor; Christine Dodson, conference treasurer; and Chrisy Powell, conference property manager, for the closing.

"The Design Team and the Conference Board of Trustees continue to welcome input, suggestions and comments throughout the building project. A Web site has been created to keep all members of the Annual Conference informed on the status of the building project and can be



Cashar Evans, trustee chair, is shown signing the documents for the sale of the United Methodist Building in Raleigh. Witnessing the signing (L-R) are Chrisy Powell, conference property manager; Wilson Hayman, conference chancellor, and Christine Dodson, conference treasurer.

accessed as a link on the Treasurer's Office Web site," Evans said.

"Project updates as well as a proposed project timeline will be available on the Web site. A dedicated e-mail address is also being used to receive comments and questions at [nccbuilds@nccumc.org](mailto:nccbuilds@nccumc.org)," Evans said.

The Web site for the building project can be accessed at [www.nccumc.org/treasurer/nccbuilds.htm](http://www.nccumc.org/treasurer/nccbuilds.htm).

## Officers elected *from page 3*

### Evangelism

Chairperson, Carol Dean; Vice Chairperson, Neal Salter; Secretary, Terry Hobbs

### Finance and Administration

Chairperson, Danny Allen; Vice Chairperson, TBA; Secretary, TBA

### Information Technology

Chairperson, Allen Swartz; Vice Chairperson, Andy Keck; Secretary, Todd Krueger

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Chairperson, Ned Hill; Vice Chairperson, Ray Broadwell; Secretary, Mike Frese

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### Refugee & Immigration

Chairperson, Rosanna Panizo-Valadares; Vice Chairperson, JoAnna Cafferty; Secretary, Lynne Manweiler

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Participants at the School of Christian Mission included: (L-R) center foreground, Emily Gillis, Parkwood UMC in Durham; Mary Parsons, Elon UMC; Martha Caves, Warren's Grove UMC in Roxboro; Winnie Rush, Cokesbury UMC in Harnett County; and Tanya Alvord, Brown's Chapel, Pittsboro

## UMW School of Christian Mission draws over 200 students to learning

By Theresa Hodges \*

The NC Conference School of Christian Mission was held July 23-26 at Methodist University in Fayetteville. Sixty-five full time students and over 150 commuters participated. Many students plan to return and teach the studies in their districts and local churches.

Studies included Israel and Palestine led by Shirley Way, Sandra Croom and Harriet Binkley, a Native American Study: Giving our Hearts Away led by Dr. Ruth Woods, Rev. Sylvia Collins-Ball and Steve Taylor, and I Believe in Jesus, led by Brenda Brown, Kathryn Self, and Rev. Charlene Pierce-Guider.

Thursday evening included Native American music and dance. Bo Goins, his six-year old nephew Nakina Leviner and Terry White danced to Native American drums, followed by Bo playing two songs on his Native American flute. They also answered questions and posed for pictures.

Many of the full-time students also enjoyed a talent show given by the youth participating at the Annual Conference Session also held at the university.

The 2009 School of Christian Mission is set for July 22-25. The study topics will include a repeat of the Native American study as well as new studies on Sudan and Food and Faith.

\* Theresa Hodges of Dover served as dean of the UMW School of Christian Mission.

## Resources for Clergy

### Rural church pastors offered scholarships for renewal program

A grant from the Rural Church Division of the Duke Endowment is providing nine full scholarships, including travel expenses, for eligible rural church pastors to attend Davidson Clergy Center's Five-Day Renewal Program.

Though not a part of the Clergy Health Initiative, this renewal program will address comparable questions of health and spirituality. It will address concerns in life in a holistic and spiritual way that is both individualized and completely confidential.

The Davidson Clergy Center is an ecumenical ministry offering a Christ-centered program dealing

with the whole person that renews the ability of a minister to lead and function as a pastor. Physical training, spiritual directions, small group and individual counseling are part of the program.

The grants are open to pastors and district superintendents serving rural churches as listed at [www.dukeendowment.org](http://www.dukeendowment.org).

Awards will be made on a first-come, first-served basis.

The Durham District, on behalf of the NC Conference, applied for and received the \$30,000 grant. To apply or learn more, contact the Durham District Office at 919-682-6439.

### "Early" and "Middle Years" clergy retirement seminars planned

Register now for the upcoming Financial and Retirement Planning Seminars coming this fall.

The Early Years Seminar (recommended for clergy within their first five years of ministry) is scheduled for Mon., Sept. 29. The Middle Years Seminar (recommended for clergy with more than five years of ministry and more than 10 years away from retirement) is scheduled for Weds., Oct. 29.

The topics addressed at these seminars will help prepare clergy for a lifetime of effective ministry.

Clergy families with a good handle on their financial condition and future plans may find their ministry is enhanced as the burdens of financial worries is lessened.

Registration deadlines for the Early Years and the Middle Years seminars are Sept. 15 and Oct. 15, respectively.

For more information, visit the Web site [www.nccumc.org/treasurer/pensions.htm](http://www.nccumc.org/treasurer/pensions.htm). Direct questions to JoAnna Cafferty at 1-800-849-4433, ext. 225 or email [jcafferty@nccumc.org](mailto:jcafferty@nccumc.org).

### Pair of programs set for Bishop's Day Apart on Sept. 15

"Challenging Pluralism: the New Way Forward for Christian Unity" and organizational and leadership development will be addressed during the Bishop's Day Apart, Sept. 15, at Nashville UMC.

All clergy are invited to attend the event. Gathering will begin at 9:30 a.m. and the program at 10 a.m. Lunch will be provided. The event will close around 4 p.m.

Offering leadership for the morning portion of the event are Dr. Carl E. Braaten and Dr. Rollin Russell.

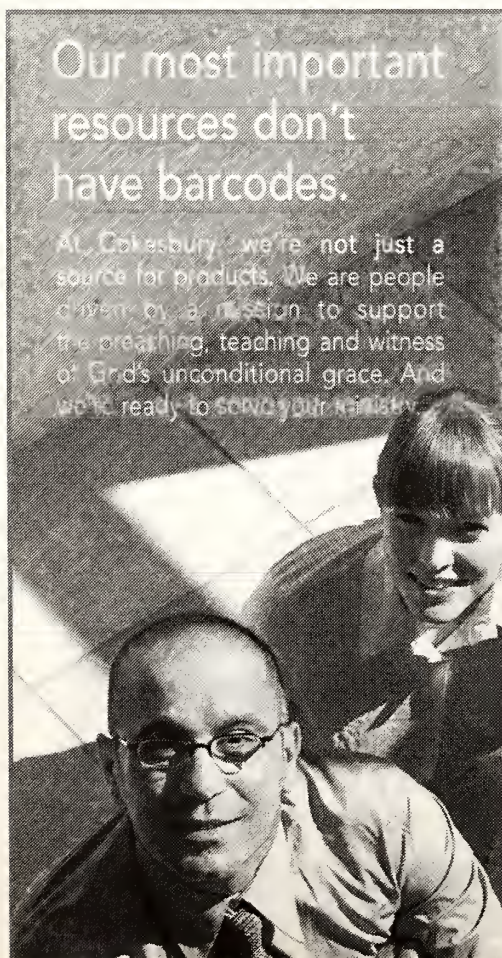
Braaten is a Lutheran theologian, author and lecturer on the ecumenical future of the church. He is the director of the Center for Catholic and Evangelical Theology.

Russell is a member of the Christian Unity Committee of the NC Council of Churches and a leader in the United Church of Christ.

Braaten and Russell will be joined later in the program by a panel of NC Conference Christian and Interfaith Unity Council members including: the Rev. Edgar DeJesus, Dr. Bernice Duffy Johnson, and the Dr. Belton Joyner, Jr.

The afternoon program features Dr. Gil Rendle, senior consultant at the Alban Institute. Rendle previously served as senior pastor of two urban congregations in Pennsylvania and as a UMC consultant. Rendle has extensive background in organizational development, group and systems theory and leadership development.

Rendle frequently speaks on leading the congregation through change and strategic planning as a spiritual practice for congregations. He advocates building on a congregation's strengths.



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# Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month

From Sept. 15 to Oct. 15, the people of the United States as well as those in The United Methodist Church will honor Hispanic Heritage Month. This month-long celebration gives local congregations the opportunity to recognize the importance and contributions of the Hispanic culture in worship. The unusual mid-month start to the celebration honors significant anniversaries during that period including the declarations of independence by the countries of: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico and Chile. This observation of Hispanic heritage and culture in the US began as a week-long celebration in 1968 and was expanded to a full month in 1988.



## Every Day Is a Celebration of Hispanic-Latino Contributions and Heritages

A Commentary by Liana Pérez Félix

In our Hispanic-Latino countries, every day is a celebration of our respective cultural heritages. We live daily the richness of our countries and our history, our customs, the concept of unity in the family, and everything that is part of our lives.

It is not until we migrate to the United States that we become aware of the diminishing or lack of these elements that form our being. Those of us who are part of a faith community, where we are identified as people, feel the support and respect for who we are and why we exist.

In The United Methodist Church, we have groups such as The National Plan for Hispanic-Latino Ministry, M.A.R.C.H.A. (Methodists Associated Representing the Cause of Hispanic Americans), Hispanic Women, Hispanic Clergywomen, and others who struggle to advocate for all of the Hispanic-Latino people.

This reinforces our idiosyncrasies and motivates us to go forward in continuous identification as children of God and in defense of who we are and what we can contribute to this nation without assimilating ourselves to the American culture.

Hispanic-Latino Heritage Month celebrates the contributions of Hispanic-Latino people to this nation. This month is not only so that we may celebrate who we are, but also for the whole nation to celebrate with us the fact that we can be part of this nation without abandoning or diminishing our Hispanic-Latino culture.

As defined by the US Census Bureau, the term Hispanic refers to Spanish-speaking people in the United States of any race. On the 2000 census form, people of Spanish/Hispanic/Latino origin could identify themselves as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino. More than 35 million people identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino on the 2000 census.

Through Hispanic-Latino Heritage Month, it is asked that people of the US observe this month with appropriate activities and ceremonies.



There is not enough space to point out all that Hispanic-Latino people have favorably contributed to this nation. From high positions in government, to the field of science, armed forces, education, sports, culinary arts, the film and theater industry, music, dance and other arts, Hispanic-Latino people have made themselves heard. Spanish is the language most taught in the school system, and it is already included in all means of communication everywhere and in every established system.

We know that parades, festivals and parties, radio and televised programs, information via internet, and great local celebrations are held throughout the United States during this special month.

Churches cannot fall behind in these celebrations. Most of our congregations are made up of representations from many Hispanic-Latino countries. It is extremely important that we become intentionally involved in the celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month this year and every year.

### Activity Ideas

- A formal dinner with typical dishes and music from the Hispanic-Latino countries represented in your congregations and communities.

- Outside activities for the congregation and the adjacent communities to include typical dishes and music, arts and crafts (for exhibit or to be sold), flags and typical dress from the countries represented, not only in the congregation, but also in the communities and this nation.

- Special worship services, where elements of the Hispanic-Latino culture are included.

Hymns in Spanish are included in *The United Methodist Hymnal*, the Spanish hymnbook *Mil Voces Para Celebrar*, the *Fiesta Cristiana Resource Book for Worship*, and *Caribbean Praise and Global Praise* (published by the General Board of Global Ministries).

- A Christian parade with floats, banners, people with their typical dress, typical music — demonstrating the Christian message with Hispanic-Latino flavor.

- Exhibit of books, arts and crafts, and resources showing the contributions of Hispanic-Latino people within and outside the church.
- Contest of paintings and drawings showing Hispanic-Latino heritage and/or the landscapes of the countries and their cultures.
- Formal concerts with classic, semi-classic, and/or music interpreted instrumentally (piano, organ, orchestra, and other instruments).
- Guest speakers who lecture about matters and situations that Hispanics/Latinos are facing.
- A children's coloring book that shows Hispanic-Latino heritage.
- Sermons and Sunday school classes with themes related to this celebration.

### A Liturgy of Celebration

**Prelude:** "Tenemos Esperanza" (We Have Hope), 129, *Mil Voces Para Celebrar*

#### Greeting and Call to Worship

Leader: Welcome to the church of Jesus Christ!

See "Every day," page 8





## The Vision of the National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry \*

***Ours is a vision of a church in which, as in the first Pentecost, all can hear the mighty works of God in their own tongue (Acts 2.8) – which is not merely a matter of language, but also of cultural identity, family traditions, etc.***

***At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit did not destroy or ignore the cultural identities of those present, but rather made the Gospel available to them in whatever language they spoke.***

\* The United Methodist Church has developed National Plans related to the development and focus of a number of minority ministries.

## EMBRACE strategy offers plan for developing Hispanic/Latino ministries in NC Conference

Resolution #29, a General Conference mandate, required every conference to develop a Comprehensive Plan of Inclusiveness by the year 2006.

Dr. Lawrence Johnson, director of Multicultural and Social Ministries for the NC Conference, led the ethnic groups in writing a plan that was relevant and logical within the context of developing ethnic ministries throughout the conference.

EMBRACE (Empowering Ministry to Bridge, Reach out, and Affirm Cultural Esteem) is the NC Conference's response to Resolution #29.

It is not a suggestion, but rather a plan for developing Hispanic/Latino ministries in the conference by working and serving together in the connectional manner that is both uniting and Methodist.

The EMBRACE document is not a "how-to" manual. Like the National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministries, it offers several key components providing a skeletal structure to build upon.

The core of the plan comes from the local churches and their district leadership. This leaves room for each

community to determine their vision, their goals, and their future in ministry together.

The first and most foundational component of EMBRACE is in Phase I: "Analyze." This requires the church feeling a call to investigate the communities and the ethnic demographic information surrounding that church.

This is also the time to have an initial conversation with the leadership that may be involved with the ministries. In a local church, that initial conversation is most effective when it can be done with the pastor and the members of the Administrative Council.

Once the initial "focus conversation" has taken place, the next step is entering into Phase II, or "Strategize." An EMBRACE workshop can be held in the church or district. The long-term results are best when there is involvement from leadership at every level. These workshops are

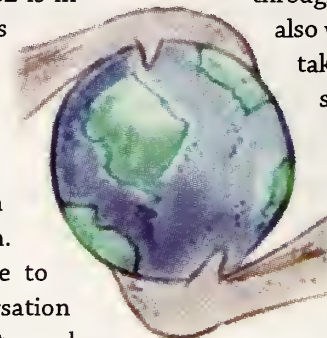
informative as well as transformational, offering cultural education, more dialogue, and a panel discussion inviting participants to look at life through different lenses. This is also where "brainstorming" takes place. Through this strategizing, churches can respond to the call for Hispanic/Latino ministry.

Phase III is the time when tangible resources, commitment, and energy are needed. This is when ministry happens. As these ministries begin to grow and become part of the local church, reports of lives won to Christ and friendships made among English and Spanish speakers excite and inspire all involved.

All are invited to pray for and support EMBRACE and Hispanic/Latino ministry in the NC conference.

Donations to the NCC Advance Special # S-00107 are appreciated.

There is much work to do – and things are happening in the church where Hispanic/Latino ministry is invited, welcomed, and present.



Images from (L-R) a Cristo Vive benefit concert, an International Festival at Luz del Pueblo and the Dia de los Niños (Children's Day festival).



## Every day is a celebration of Hispanic-Latino heritages from page 7

People: We come from different cultures and races.  
 Leader: All are invited into the doors of our sanctuary.  
 People: We are adults, children, and youth.  
 Leader: All are invited to the altar of our church.  
 People: We are women, men, girls, and boys.  
 Leader: All are invited to the Table for Communion.  
 People: We are employed, unemployed, with limited income, and with great wealth.  
 Leader: All are invited to the baptismal font.  
 People: We experience God in many ways.  
 Leader: All are invited to share with us in fellowship.  
 People: We come, Lord, we come.  
 Leader: Welcome, all of you!

**Hymn of Praise:** "Cantemos al Señor" ("Let's Sing Unto the Lord"), *Mil Voces Para Celebrar* 49 or *United Methodist Hymnal* 149

**Prayer of Thanksgiving** (UNISON)

Most merciful God, we give you thanks for the work you give us to do. Our work gives us a sense of importance. We give thanks for the people we encounter daily. People give us a sense of belonging. We give thanks for schedules and routines. They help us feel grounded in a changing world. We give thanks for Jesus Christ. Christ's love gives meaning to all of life. Amen.

**Hymn:** "De los Cuatro Rincones del Mundo" ("From All Four of Earth's Faraway Corners"), *Mil Voces Para Celebrar* 378 (in Spanish and English)

**Affirmation of Faith:** Page 271, *Fiesta Cristiana*

**Pastoral Prayer**

**Offering**

**Dedication of Offering** (unison)

God of money and minds, savings and service, land and love. We come at this time to honor you with our substance. All we have, Lord, we give to you. Accept these offerings. May we always remember the source from which they have come. Amen.

**Reading of the Scriptures**

Old Testament: Deuteronomy 10:12-13, 17-21

Epistles: Galatians 5:13-26

Gospel: John 8:33-36

**Sermon:** The Truth Shall Set You Free (Or select other themes and Scripture readings appropriate to the celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month)

**Call to Discipleship**

**Prayer:** Farm Worker Prayer by César Chávez (1927-93)

**Hymn of Commitment:** "Sois L Semilla" ("You Are the Seed"), *Mil Voces Para Celebrar* 291 or *United Methodist Hymnal* 583

**Blessing and Commendation**

You have come; you have heard; you have listened. May your understanding cause you to respond. Go forth and dare to make a difference.

**Postlude**

\* The Rev. Liana Pérez Félix is the pastor of Bethlehem UMC in Clarksville, Tenn.





Participants enjoyed their day at the Children's Festival at "La Trinidad" - part of Jonesboro UMC in the Sanford District.

## EMBRACE Vision Is Focused on Hispanic/Latino Children, Youth

Trinity Retreat Center at Salter Path, NC will be remembered as the special place where 40 NC Conference Hispanic/Latino leaders gathered to join hearts and minds and prepare for the kingdom work of 2008 - 2011.

Through three days of physical and spiritual renewal, they developed one great vision and plan, determined and postured for bold and passionate ministry in the new year.

Four participants and one guest speaker/musician were non-Hispanic/Latinos, emphasizing the intention of The National Plan for Hispanic Latino Ministry to be a "whole church" plan which includes all United Methodists.

The larger part of the energy and resources spent on ministries is focused on a consistent agenda of reaching out to children and youth. NC Conference Director of Hispanic/Latino Ministries Cookie Santiago states, "So much of our energy has been spent trying to be heard and seen. We can no longer be called the 'invisible' people or the people with 'no voice.' It's time now to take focus on the ministry of outreach and discipleship of our children and youth."

During the retreat, the Rev. Rosanna Panizo of Cristo Vive made an observation about the role of Hispanic/Latino persons in the church: "We are not your diversity. We are here because we are the church. We are United Methodists."

## Fast Facts

- In the US, the Hispanic population is projected to nearly triple, from 46.7 million to 132.8 million during the 2008-2050 period. Its share of the nation's total population is projected to double, from 15 percent to 30 percent. Thus, nearly one in three U.S. residents would be Hispanic.
- As of 2006, North Carolina has the 5th fastest-growing Hispanic population estimated at 6.7%.
- In 2050, the nation's population of children is expected to be 62 percent minority, up from 44 percent today. Thirty-nine percent are projected to be Hispanic (up from 22 percent in 2008).
- The working-age population is projected to become more than 50% minority in 2039 and be 55% minority in 2050 (up from 34% in 2008). Also in 2050, it is projected to be more than 30% Hispanic (up from 15% in 2008), 15% black (up from 13% in 2008) and 9.6% Asian (up from 5.3% in 2008).
- Hispanic workers filled one in three new jobs created in North Carolina between 1995 and 2005, with a significant concentration in construction.
- North Carolina exports to Latin America have grown markedly in recent years. Such exports were responsible for nearly 70,000 jobs and \$231 million in state and local taxes in 2004.

### Sources:

"An Older and More Diverse Nation by Midcentury," Aug. 14, 2008, US Census Bureau News <http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/012496.html>

"State and County Quick Facts: North Carolina," US Census Bureau <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/37000.html>

*The Economic Impact of the Hispanic Population on the State of North Carolina* by J. Kasarda and J. Johnson; Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise, Univ. of NC at Chapel Hill, Jan. 2006.

## Reencuentro, Evento de Jovenes Hispano/Latinos

### Reunion Event for Hispanic/Latino Youth

By Carmen Casillas \*

La conferencia de Carolina del Norte participo con la conferencia de Florida, y tuvimos oportunidad de disfrutar al campamento de jovenes.

La invitacion vino de parte de Yohanka Cabezas, quien es la coordinadora de ministerios para jovenes Hispano/Latino en esa conferencia, y se mando un email a todas las iglesias par aver si habia interes.

Se reunieron tres iglesias la cuales fueron Unidos por Cristo, Grimesland, Luz del Pueblo, y Latinos Unidos en Cristo. Todos en total eran 31 personas.

Los jovenes estaban bien timidos al principio. Terminaron muy contentos por quererse ver otra vez.

Los lideres que fueron decidieron hacer un reencuentro para darle seguimiento a este Nuevo comienzo de amistad entre estos jovenes. Se encontraran otra vez el 2 de Agosto.

Empezaron con una oracion, luego con juegos, un corto drama per muy intenso donde los jovenes estaban muy atentos. Tuvieron un tiempo de adoracion.

La predicacion fue dado por Alma Ruiz, quien hablo sobre la semilla del sembrador. Ella hacia preguntas y los jovenes muy listos escuchando todo contestaban a todas las preguntas.

A lo ultimo, no podia faltar un partido de soccer, donde hasta el pastor recibio un gran reto con los jovenes. La noche no queria acabarse para estos jovenes. Y concluyeron verse de Nuevo el proximo mes.

Algo que ocurrio a una parte de los jovenes que tenian que venir a este evento. Despues que tenian todo preparado para venir, tuvieron noticias que inmigracion iba a estar en el condado de Wake, donde estos jovenes residen.

Sigamos unidos llevando nuestro clamor al Dios del cielo y de la tierra, la cual sabe todas las cosas y mas que nada es un Dios de justicia.

Esta era nuestra primera actividad de jovenes como conferencia. Jesus ya vencio, gritemos Su Victoria a los cuatro vientos.

\* Carmen Casillas is the Burlington District EMBRACE coordinator.

The NC Conference sent a total of 31 Hispanic/Latino youth and adult chaperones to join the Florida Annual Conference Spanish language Youth Camp at the invitation of their conference Youth Coordinator, Yohanka Cabezas. This was the first event of its kind in the Florida conference.

Three NC churches responded with young people and chaperones: Unidos por Cristo (Grimesland), Luz del Pueblo, and Latinos Unidos en Cristo. Several volunteered to serve as counselors and chaperones for the first Hispanic/Latino Youth Camp. All together, there were a total of 31 who attended.

Initially, the young people were quite timid. But, as is typical with young people, they made friends who they said good-bye to with desire to see each other again. The leaders who chaperoned decided to provide this reunion for our conference youth by organizing a reunion gathering on Saturday Aug. 2 at Unidos por Cristo in Grimesland, Greenville District.

They began with prayer, played some games and watched a skit that was short but carried a very powerful message. They worshipped together and sang praises and special songs. Alma Ruiz, wife of Rev. Ismael Ruiz, preached a message about the seed and the sower. The young people listened attentively and were able to respond in a dialogue with the preacher.

After all of that, the day would still not have been complete without a game of soccer where even the pastor was greatly challenged by the young people. Nobody wanted the day to end. So the young people took the initiative to pick a date when they could meet again.

The gathering was impacted by the realities of being an immigrant, even for teenagers. The group of young people from Luz del Pueblo in Cary had been looking forward to this reunion. They were prepared to come but were unable to attend because of the news that Immigration Raids would be taking place in Wake County, where they live.

Voices continue to be raised to the God of heaven and earth, who knows all things and more than anything is a God of justice.

This was the first conference activity with Hispanic/Latino young people. That is still a victory to be proclaimed.





## Forum connects NCC leaders

The EMBRACE Forum II was the second of three events held with Bishop Gwinn, the extended cabinet and other key conference leadership to strengthen and maintain communication and connection between the conference leadership and Hispanic/Latino ministries.

The Rev. Cookie Santiago, conference director of Hispanic /Latino Ministries, explained that the Forums were intended "to help us understand what Hispanic/Latino ministries are really like and what it takes for them to be successful." Connection was high on the list of priorities for Santiago, and she applauded the growing response from local congregations and pastors to learning more about answering the call of God to open their hearts, minds, and doors to become inclusive.

The Rev. Francisco Cañas, national coordinator of the National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministries, presented information about the current realities of Hispanic/Latino growth nationwide. He also presented on the realities of where The United Methodist Church can do more to equip and encourage leadership to develop ministries for outreach and evangelism and to meet the many needs of Hispanic/Latino communities.

Cañas said he sees great potential in the EMBRACE strategy and shared the possibilities of this serving as an example or model for other conferences. He also announced that Santiago is now a commissioned consultant through GBGM for the National Plan and spoke to the strength of her experience.

See "EMBRACE workshop," page 11

## Seeds of Love shared in Cary

By Edith Salazar \*

The Hispanic/Latino ministry at White Plains UMC partners with Genesis UMC and Cary Christian Fellowship Church. The churches joined forces to create the "Semillas de Amor" (Seeds of Love) ministry.

The ministry offers games and creative music for children ages 0-2 years old, Bible scripture and verses for the 3-5 year old children, tutoring for elementary and middle school students, and English as a Second Language classes for adults.

Seeds of Love began with two Genesis UMC volunteers, Kelly Lewis and Hanah Boston, who coordinated with the Rev. Edith Salazar, pastor of the Hispanic/Latino ministry at White Plains UMC.

With a vision of Neighbors Helping Neighbors, they recruited volunteers from the community to help with this outreach.

Now, 50 volunteers including Brad Dunn,

the associate pastor of Genesis UMC and Scott Hanah, the pastor of Cary Christian Fellowship Church.

This program began meeting once per week, but the need to extend the program from one to two days per week was quickly recognized.

This ministry is an opportunity to share the love of God while sharing the different cultural customs and traditions.

In December 2007, the traditional "Posada" was celebrated. Typical foods were shared along with dramatizations by the children and youth, as well as musical performances with singing, games and a piñata. It was

an opportunity for all to share the gospel.

Through this program, Luz del Pueblo now has eight small groups that are meeting in the homes of families who participate in "Semillas de Amor" (Seeds of Love.)

\* The Rev. Edith Salazar is coordinator of Luz del Pueblo at White Plains UMC in Cary.



## To learn more about NCC Hispanic/Latino ministries

### Burlington District

Davis Street UMC  
Carmen Casillas, EMBRACE Coordinator  
606 E. Davis St, Burlington, NC 27215  
(336) 226-3357

### Durham District

Cristo Vive UMC, Rev. Rosanna Panizo, EMBRACE Coordinator  
2700 N. Roxboro Rd., Durham, NC 27704  
(919) 317-8700, rpanizo@nccumc.org

### Elizabeth City District

Center Hill UMC, Sadot Mendez, Pastor  
605 Center Hill Hwy, Tyner, NC 27980  
(252) 426-5620, Sadot\_mendez@yahoo.com

### Greenville District

Unidos por Cristo UMC, Ismael Ruiz, Pastor  
PO Box 772, Grimesland, NC 27837  
(252) 413-6812, unidos@earthlink.net; ismaelruiz@nccumc.org

### New Bern District

EMBRACE Program: Advance # S-00172

Belgrade/Tabernacle UMC, Bible Study  
Swansboro UMC/ESL Classes

Latinos Unidos en Cristo/Pine Valley UMC  
Rev. Jose Mora, 910 Pine Valley Rd.  
Jacksonville, NC 28546, (910) 353-4611  
jfmoragil@hotmail.com

### Raleigh District

Apex UMC Community & Latino Ministries  
Rev. Jose Luis Villaseñor  
100 S. Hughes St., Apex, NC 27502  
(919) 362 780,  
joseluis.villasenor@apexumc.org

Avent Ferry UMC / "Kids Café"  
2700 Avent Ferry Rd., Raleigh, NC 27606  
(919) 833-9394

Comunidad de Cristo/  
Christ Community UMC  
Rev. Jose Javier Montañez, Pastor  
1082 Amelia Church Rd., Clayton, NC 27520  
Tel: (919) 553-9770  
javierandpersida@claytonnccumc.org

Knightdale UMC/Hispanic Latino Ministry  
Pilar Adrianzen, Lay Missioner  
221 N. First Street, Knightdale, NC 27545  
(919) 266-2373  
pilaradrianzen@yahoo.com

La Escuelita/Fuquay-Varina UMC  
100 S. Judd Parkway, SE  
Fuquay-Varina, NC 27526  
(919) 552-4331,  
wildmillers@earthlink.net

Luz de Pueblo/White Plains UMC  
Rev. Edith Salazar  
305 SE Maynard Rd. Cary, NC 27511,  
(919) 467- 4685  
edithsalazarv@yahoo.com

Pueblo de Esperanza/Millbrook UMC  
Rev. Leo Reich, 1712 E. Millbrook Rd.  
Raleigh, NC 27609, (919) 872-3372  
leoreich@earthlink.net

Sunrise UMC/Hispanic Latino Ministry  
Pilar Adrianzen, Lay Missioner  
5420 Sunset Lake Rd., Holly Springs, NC 27540, (919) 303-3720  
pilaradrianzen@yahoo.com

### Rocky Mount District

La Estrella Resplandeciente  
Rev. Luis Reinoso  
5951 E. Main Street, Bailey, NC 27807  
(252) 235-6256, reinosol@nccumc.org

### Sanford District

EMBRACE Program: Advance# S-00032

El Camino UMC,  
Daniel Pantoja, Pastor  
123 E. Chestnut Dr., Siler City, NC 27344  
(919) 663-0011, Dannyp2357@yahoo.es

La Trinidad/Jonesboro UMC  
Rev. Ismael Perez, EMBRACE Coordinator  
407 W. Main St. Sanford, NC 27331  
(919) 551-8137, lizzy1941@gmail.com

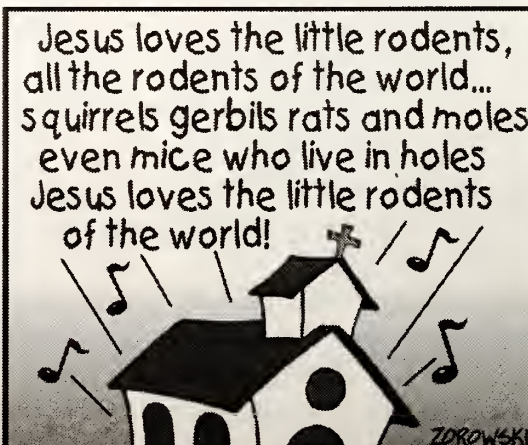
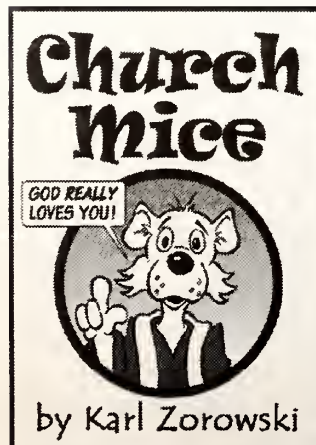
### Wilmington District

Ocean View UMC,  
Contact: Angel Soto  
8400 East Oak Island Dr., Oak Island, NC 28465, (910) 278-5973  
asoto\_001@yahoo.com

### NCC Hispanic/Latino Ministries

EMBRACE Program: Advance #S-00107

Rev. Cookie Santiago, Director  
csantiago@nccumc.org  
P.O. Box 10955, Raleigh, NC 27605  
1-800-849-4433, Fax: (919) 834-7989  
www.nccembrace.org  
EMBRACE@nccumc.org





# Almost \$3 million in Duke Endowment grants awarded to NC Conference churches

The Rural Church division of The Duke Endowment recently announced \$2,846,500 in total grants designated for churches in the North Carolina Conference.

This represents grants given during the grant period ending June 30.

Grants were awarded to the following churches:

## Burlington District

- Burlington District to develop an Hispanic/Latino ministry;
- Efland UMC to support a community after school program;
- Union Grove UMC to support a prison ministry program and to support the Community Farm at Chestnut Ridge;
- Leasburg UMC to establish an oral history program for churches;
- Prospect UMC to build a fellowship hall.

## Durham District

- Pleasant Green UMC in support of a health and nutrition program for children.

## Elizabeth City District

- Wesley Memorial UMC (Columbia) to build an annex;
- St. John's UMC to support community dinners for people in need;
- Hatteras UMC to renovate the sanctuary.

## Fayetteville District

- Solid Rock UMC to support the Solid Start child care center;
- Halls UMC to build a fellowship hall and kitchen.

## Goldsboro District

- Beulaville/Kenansville Charge to support a housing and home repair ministry for low-income and elderly residents.

## Greenville District

- Salem UMC to build a playground and walking trail.

## New Bern District

- Merrimon UMC to build an accessibility ramp.

## Raleigh District

- NC Conference to purchase two

travel trailers for mission project managers;

- NC Conference to help rural churches with adequate insurance;
- NC Annual Conference to provide pensions to retired ministers and widows and dependent children of deceased ministers.

## Rockingham District

- Sandy Plains UMC to support a child care program;
- Rockingham District to support a mentoring and tutoring ministry for young people.

## Sanford District

- Broadway UMC to assist in sanctuary renovations;
- Merritt's Chapel UMC to assist with sanctuary repairs;
- Center UMC to support a congregational nursing program;
- Piney Grove UMC to establish an emergency food pantry.

## Wilmington District

- Wrightsboro UMC to establish a food pantry and to build a fellowship hall and education building.

For more information about The Duke Endowment and about applying for a grant, go to <http://www.dukeendowment.org/ruralchurch>.

# EMBRACE workshop connects leaders

from page 10

rience and knowledge as a resource in the conference.

Participants received a binder of information as a resource for anyone wanting information about the EMBRACE (Empowering Ministry to Bridge, Reach out and Affirm Cultural Esteem) Comprehensive Plan of Inclusiveness for Hispanic/Latino Ministries in North Carolina.

A panel shared the work of their different ministries. The Rev. Kevin Baker (Reconciliation UMC/Durham), the Rev. Rosanna Panizo (Cristo Vive UMC/Durham), the Rev. Edith Salazar and Gladys Flores (Luz del Pueblo/Raleigh District), and Stephanie Lind (Field Ed/Intern to H/L Ministries) all shared examples of becoming unified congregations despite the challenges of diversity.

Bishop Al Gwinn made a commitment to have Cañas return. This will also include a time for the Bishop and the Cabinet to respond to an EMBRACE Vision 2008-11 developed by Hispanic/Latino Ministries leadership in Nov. 2007 (see page 9).

The Bishop and Cabinet were asked for ways that they might respond to the vision of Hispanic/Latino leadership with their own goals and hopes for their districts.

EMBRACE Forum III will take place in 2009.

## DEATHS

JONES, Ruby H., widow of Vassar Jones, died Aug. 7. The funeral service was held on Aug. 10 at Long Memorial UMC in Roxboro.

CAPPS, Rev. Clingman Capps, (NB: retired), died Aug. 7. A service of death and resurrection in celebration of his life and ministry was held at Woodmont UMC in Reidsville on Aug. 10.

## Let's Journey To....

### Israel/Palestine

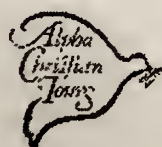
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By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

**October 5, 2008****Text: Acts 2:1-47****"Empowered to Be a Community"**

When I was growing up in Siler City, religious diversity was pretty much limited to "which Protestant church do you attend?"

I knew one Roman Catholic family and was horrified to discover that they kept beer in their refrigerator.

There were Black congregations and there were White congregations.

In my own Methodist flock there was still a bit of recognition that some members were former Methodist Protestants and some members were formerly in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

Even with these differences, it was not hard to "talk religion," not only because we all spoke English but because almost all our spiritual journeys used the same vocabulary.

This week's text is about the Holy Spirit's moving the gathered community to talk in ways that everyone in a radically diverse audience could understand (Acts 2:5-11). Now there is a Pentecost challenge!

How does the Church today seek to communicate in ways that can be understood by teens, by seniors, by Hispanics, by believers, by agnostics, by PhDs, by GED-drop outs, by children, by "techno-geeks," by left-handed-poker-playing card sharks from Dubuque, Iowa—you get the idea: how do we communicate the gospel to our strangely diverse world?

One aspect of this Pentecost

text is often overlooked: those who gathered that day were devout Jews (Acts 2:5). This was not a hodge-podge cross-section of society. These were people of faith, even referred to as "devout" (the Greek word literally means "taking carefully"). These were persons who took faith matters seriously. And when the Spirit came, they had no idea what it meant (Acts 2:12)!

It just might be that when we believers think we have things pretty well figured out, we have sent a signal that we have not heard recently from the Spirit! The Holy Spirit blows a Wind that undoes some things we thought we had pegged down (2:2) and stirs a Fire that destroys some of our pet beliefs and practices (2:3).

In this account, persons heard the good news in their own language (2:6). This reminds me that even though there is a unifying truth in the gospel message, our differences (of language, of culture, of tradition) are still respected.

There is a place—even a place side-by-side—for our differences as the Spirit washes over us with the common good news: Jesus saves.

**What Someone Else Has Said:**

In a book about baptism (*Remember Who You Are*, Upper Room Books), William H. Willimon has written: "The Holy Spirit permeates the Christian's existence, begins the Christian pilgrimage, and leads us daily, tugging at our lives until they be fully turned toward God."

**Prayer:**

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Come, Holy Spirit..."

**October 12, 2008****Text: Acts 6:1-15, 8:1-8****"Expansion of the Community"**

This week's lesson would not be so bad if it had not been named "Expansion of the Community."

Note some of the things involved as the early Christian family grew: (a) complaints about fairness (6:1), (b) specialization of ministry tasks (6:2), (c) passing the baton of leadership (6:6), (d) arguments within the community (6:9), (e) false accusations (6:13), (f) stoning to death of Stephen (8:1), (g) severe persecution (8:1), (h) going into hiding (8:1), (i) imprisonment of believers (8:3). These are hardly the main tools usually recommended for church growth.

These accounts in the Book of Acts do not seem like fertile soil for "expansion of the community" but the report is "The word of God continued to spread; the number of disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem (Acts 6:7)."

These accounts in the Book of Acts do not seem like the occasion for much celebration, but the report is "So there was great joy in the city (Acts 8:8)."

Some time ago in the Sunday School class I attend, we were discussing evangelism. One member of the class told of a new Christian who had come to faith in the church he attended. He had asked the convert "What brought you to faith?" The reply was: "I work with Wendy (a member of that parish) and I wanted what she had."

That's what is going on in these texts: even in the midst of the persecution and attacks, the Christians showed something that others wanted: a peace, a love, a joy, a victory, reconciliation. What a demanding discipline!

Is my life as a Christian lived in such a way that others might look on and say, "I want what he has" or "I want what she has?"

I am not sure that the early Christians saw growth and expansion as the goal of the movement. The goal was faithfulness to Jesus Christ. The growth was a by-product.

It's not that the numbers were not important—they do note the increase (6:7, 8:7)—but the strategy was not around how to get the count up; the call was to faithful discipleship.

Do we ignore to tactics and tools for church growth? Hardly. But we

measure them against The Master's invitation to "come, follow." We do false advertising unless our invitation is to a ministry shaped by a cross and an empty tomb.

**What Someone Else Has Said:**

Arthur Gafke (*Leading with the Fissures*, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry) has written: "(Growth?) We look to God as the giver of life. Jesus Christ is the assurance of life in the midst of death and beyond."

**Prayer:**

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Lord, I want to be faithful. I want your magnetic grace to use me to reach others..."

**October 19, 2008****Text: Acts 9:1-31****"Transformed to Witness to the Community"**

Mount Olivet United Methodist Church is on Ananias Dare Street in Manteo. (Ananias Dare was the father of Virginia Dare; her birth was the first recorded to English parents in North America.)

I assume that Ananias Dare was named for the believer who shows up in this week's text as the mentor of Paul (Acts 9:10). The biblical Ananias deserves some recognition!

Our Roman Catholics brothers and sisters acknowledge Ananias as a saint. Although I have seen numerous churches named "St. Paul," I do not recall seeing one named "St. Ananias." (Ananias was from Damascus and is the patron saint of the Syrian city.) This disciple usually gets his identification in the reflection of praise given to Saint Paul.

Do you realize what courage it must have taken for Ananias to respond to God's call for him to minister to the fire-breathing Saul (9:11)!

What would I do if God revealed to me that Osama bin Laden had been converted and needed counsel about the faith? (I think I would assume I had not heard God correctly!)

Ananias dared—oops, I did not mean to make a play on the man's name!—to help this venomous soul who had so recently been on the attack against believers.

I believe in conversion—my goodness, I have even seen it—but I fear I would want a little evidence of the new beginning before I got too involved with the convert! It is a good

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**Upcoming events  
throughout the Conference**

## Hispanic/Latino Convocation: Leadership in the Wesleyan Way

Register by Sept. 15 to join a gathering of Hispanic/Latino leadership to be held Oct. 2-3 at the Greensboro Marriott Downtown. The event will highlight model ministry programs, discuss emerging issues in the church, share strategies and address common struggles. The conference is a collaboration of the North Carolina and Western North Carolina Conferences, Duke Divinity School and The Duke Endowment.

There is a registration fee of \$25 and The Duke Endowment will cover the cost of room and meals for all registered participants. For more information and a brochure, go to [www.nccumc.org/events/convocat.htm](http://www.nccumc.org/events/convocat.htm).

## Cyberspace, cybersafety, cyberministry workshops

A series of this workshop will be offered throughout the Conference in September and November. Clergy, staff, and key leadership in local churches are invited to attend. The cost is \$5 per person (nonrefundable) and a church group's registration must be received 10 days prior to the event the group plans to attend. The brochure with more information and registration form is available at [www.nccumc.org/childrnmin/cybersafety.pdf](http://www.nccumc.org/childrnmin/cybersafety.pdf). The dates (all Saturdays) and locations are as follows: Sept. 20 at White Plains UMC-Cary, Sept. 27 at Wesley Memorial UMC-Wilmington and Nov. 15 at Edenton UMC-Edenton. For each date and location, registration will be from 9:15-9:30 A.M. and the program will run from 9:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M.

## CPI application deadline Sept. 30

Comprehensive Plan of Inclusiveness (CPI) grants are given to strengthen programs/projects developed by one or more United Methodist local churches with priority given to ethnic churches. Goals of the program are to support mission projects that address social problems or concerns as they impact and empower racial/ethnic persons as well as to provide programs/projects for people to work together toward a better understanding of inclusiveness.

For the Fall 2008 granting period, applications are due on Sept. 30 by 4 p.m. (if hand-delivered) or must be postmarked by Sept. 30. No faxed applications or applications without required signatures will be considered. Guidelines and applications are available in the "downloads" section on the conference Multicultural and Social Ministries Web site. New and innovative ministries will get strong consideration. For further information call Lawrence E. Johnson in the Multicultural office (919-832-9560).

## UMVIM team to Haiti

United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) of the NC Conference is sponsoring a mission work team to go to Haiti, Nov. 3-17 to construct and distribute Solar Ovens. Cost per person is \$1,500 for the two weeks. Orientation for the team will be Sept. 12-13 at Oak Island. If interested, contact Butch Huffman, [butchhuffman@nccumc.org](mailto:butchhuffman@nccumc.org) or 919-931-4304 (cell phone).

## Immigration newsletter from the North Carolina Council of Churches

The NC Council of Churches has created a free resource, called "Faith & Immigration," with accurate information about hospitality and justice for immigrants. It will be distributed electronically about every two months. To receive this newsletter in the future, e-mail [nccofc@nccouncilofchurches.org](mailto:nccofc@nccouncilofchurches.org) with "Subscribe Immigration" in the subject line.

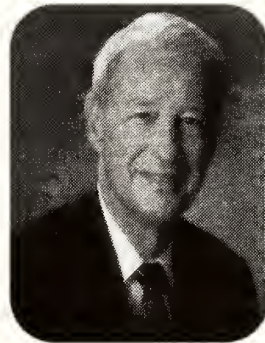
## Spanish immersion opportunity available through UMVIM

NC Volunteers In Mission is sponsoring a two-week Spanish Immersion program in Guatemala during November 2008 and is looking for people to join the group. Any level of Spanish, from beginner to advanced, can be accommodated. Cost is \$600 plus airfare and includes lessons, room & board, in-country travel, and insurance. For more information, visit the Web site at [www.spanishimmersionprogram.embarqspace.com](http://www.spanishimmersionprogram.embarqspace.com).

## "Welcoming the Sojourner" learning event to be in September

A learning event on immigration will be held Sept. 11-13, at Hendrix College in Conway, AR. Co-sponsored by the Arkansas Board of Church and Society, Arkansas Justice for Our Neighbors, and the General Board of Church and Society, "Welcoming the Sojourner" will respond to the immigration debate from a Biblical faith perspective. For details go to [www.umc-gbcs.org](http://www.umc-gbcs.org) and select the Calendar section. The Welcoming the Sojourner entry is under the "Programs and Conferences" heading. Click on "more..." for details and registration.

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# October adult Bible study *continued from page 12*

thing God called on Ananias and not on Belton!

I read of a pastor (in Oklahoma, if I recall) who was thrilled when a prominent man came to the prayer rail and gave his life to Jesus at the end of a service one Sunday morning. The pastor glowed at the Sunday lunch table and said to his wife, "Do you think I ought to call the papers and tell them that Mr. Jones was converted today at First United Methodist Church?"

His wife wisely answered: "Do you want people to think that it is news when someone is converted at First United Methodist Church?"

The study text helps us appreciate the transformation in Paul's life. In fact, "Damascus Road experience" is a term still used to describe this kind of change in a person's life.

But my heart has been more attracted in this study to Ananias: the brave disciple who baptized Paul

(9:18) and went to bat for him among untrusting believers (9:21). Paul was not the only one transformed!

## What Someone Else Has Said:

According to Walter Brueggemann (*Cadences of Home*, Westminster John Knox), "...Human transformation does not happen through didacticism or through excessive certitude, but through the playful entertainment of another scripting of reality that may subvert the old given text..."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "What? Witness to whom?..."

## October 26, 2008

**Text: Acts 13**

### "Commissioned by the Community"

Just before I left to go to General Conference, the pastor of the church that Toni and I attend called me to the front of the sanctuary and others joined him in blessing me and sending me forth with their commissioning.

Later, as one of the members of the congregation prepared to leave home for a summer-long mission internship, several of us gathered around her and sent her forth, praying that God would use her to carry the hearts and witness of all of us as she went to her summer's experience.

At last spring's annual conference, the bishop offered prayer as he extended his hands over those being commissioned and he (and others) laid hands on those being ordained deacons and elders.

The church has continued the long practice of commissioning those the community sends forth in behalf of the common mission.

That's what this week's study is about. The map of the ancient world

was being drawn by the footsteps of these missionaries: Jerusalem, Antioch, Seleucia, Cyprus, Salamis, Paphos (Acts 13:1-6).

The gospel's confrontation with the world was ignited by fasting, prayer, and the laying on of hands (13:3). The instruments of that commissioning were those early faithful disciples, but the text is clear that it is the Holy Spirit who has set them apart (13:2).

What has the Holy Spirit set you apart to do? If this biblical account is any indication, we do well to listen to the call of the community to serve; the community just might be speaking for the Holy Spirit!

There is, of course, a kind of sadness in the phrase "sent them off" (Acts 13:3). When one is set apart (and sent off), one is called to leave the comforts and familiarities of home.

For example, if one is called to lead a congregation in matters of financial stewardship, one is set apart from the cultural view that the amount of money is more important than the heart from which it is given.

For example, if one is called to visit shut-ins, one is set apart from the cultural view that "my time is my own to spend as I choose."

For example, if one is called to be a prayer warrior, one is set apart from the misguided assumption that "the preacher does all the praying around here." To be commissioned is to be set apart, "sent off."

In this account, Barnabas and Saul take the gospel into the core of the enemy (13:8). There's no telling where the community needs to send us, but I am sure the Holy Spirit is still calling and commissioning and sending forth. Who will go?

## What Someone Else Has Said:

In A Royal "Waste" of Time (Eerd-

mans), Marva J. Dawn offers a caution: "Sometimes—and certainly this is a strong temptation in churches—power is accumulated in the guise of servanthood."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Use me, send me..."

## conference CALENDAR

### September

- 5 UMW School of Christian Mission Committee Meeting; 7:30 pm; Dover UMC; Dover
- 6 Shepherding 21st Century Sheep; Cyberministry & Cybersafety; Haymount UMC, Fayetteville; 9:15 am-12:30 pm  
UMW Conference Executive Committee Meeting; 9:30 am; Dover UMC; Dover
- 11 The Task Force on Institutional Relations; 10 am; UM Building; Raleigh
- 19-21 UMW Mother Child Retreat
- 20 Shepherding 21st Century Sheep; Cyberministry & Cybersafety; White Plains UMC, Cary; 9:15am-12:30pm
- 27 Shepherding 21st Century Sheep; Cyberministry and Cybersafety; Wesley Memorial UMC; Wilmington; 9:15am to 12:30pm

### October

- 4 NCC Historical Society Meeting; 10am-noon; NCC Commission on Archives & History 1-3pm; Trinity UMC, Durham
- 11 UMW Conference Annual Meeting; Methodist University; Fayetteville

For more information, visit [www.nccumc.org](http://www.nccumc.org) and click on "Calendar" at the top of the page.

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# around the CONFERENCE

## Summer Enrichment Camp at Galilee UMC, Laurinburg focuses on character-building

This summer Galilee UMC in Laurinburg expanded its after-school program and held a Summer Enrichment Camp from June 17 through July 31.

Meeting daily from 8:30am-2:30pm, the focus was on character building. Activities were designed to build positive self-esteem and character. The camp enrolled 115 children ages 3-14 years old.

Christian education was an important part of the Summer Enrichment Camp. Dr. Jesse Brunson, pastor at Galilee UMC, presented Bible study each morning for the children.

One emphasis of the Galilee summer camp was child nutrition and health.

Staff of the Scotland County Health Department presented programs on Child Health and Nutrition.

Children were given guidelines in choosing healthy meals and snacks. They were given information to take home to parents.

Children at the camp were taught about sharing and caring for the community. The camp chose Church Community Services of Scotland County for its Community Service

Project called "ShoeBoxes of Love."

Children filled shoe boxes with canned goods and dry food items, as well as monetary donations to the Church Community Services of Scotland County. The children covered the shoe boxes with original artwork.

Public safety instruction was offered by Scotland County Sheriff's Deputies during the Public Safety Awareness segment. Children also listened as an inmate in the Scotland jail talked about the impact on his life after making bad choices.

Participants explored the importance of reading throughout the year. Gwen Rainer, Media Specialist with Marlboro County Schools in neighboring Bennettsville, SC and a renowned Regional Storyteller, read to the children, told them a story, and gave excellent reading tips.

Galilee UMC started the Bridge Builders After-School Program in October 2005 in partnership with I. E. Johnson Elementary School. In 2007, the partnership added North Laurinburg Elementary School.

Children in the Bridge Builders program have experienced success in the school achievement and the program continues to be a vital link to closing the achievement gap in Scotland County.

Bridge Builders operates during the school term daily from 2:45-5:30pm.



Gwen Rainer, storyteller



LEFT The camp included Public safety instruction offered by Scotland County Sheriff's Deputies. Campers also heard from an inmate who talked about the importance of making good choices.



RIGHT: Dr. Jesse Brunson (standing), presented Bible study each morning for the children. The 115 children enrolled in the summer camp heard messages and participated in activities designed to build positive self-esteem and character.

### Submitting Around the Conference Information

Items for consideration can be emailed to [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org). The deadline is the 5th day of the month prior to publication. All articles and photos are subject to editing. Photographs or art should be recorded in the largest size and highest resolution possible. Send in JPG or TIFF formats. Please send articles and photos in separate files. Photos should not be embedded in articles or in photo viewing programs.



Church members worked hard to prepare meals over the 3-day festival.

## Moyock UMC finds spiritual benefits hosting Good Neighbor Festival to support benevolence

After depleting budgeted monies from the church's benevolence fund, Moyock UMC sought ways to continue caring for their community.

To that end, church members created their first Good Neighbor Festival, held July 10-12, and raised \$2,700 for the benevolence fund.

The festival also brought in a significant amount of food given to Pilmoor Memorial UMC's food bank.

Moyock pastor Steve Castle said, "Our current economy has created hardships for many people. We distributed the money we budgeted for our benevolence fund months ago, and people were still calling every week needing help. We felt that we wanted to be able to continue to help as many people as possible. As it turned out, the spiritual benefits for our congregation were as exciting as the money we raised and the food we collected. I am very grateful to all our church members who gave so willingly of their time. We can't wait

until next year."

The Good Neighbor Festival included a three-day yard sale, children's activities, and food including hotdogs, chips, sodas, sno-cones and popcorn. The biggest money maker were the home-cooked barbecue dinners sold Saturday.

In addition, the church provided free coffee and use of the church's restrooms for beach travelers during the 48 consecutive hours of the Good Neighbor Festival.

A prayer tent was also made available during the 48-hour period. Church members were present to pray for and/or with those who visited the prayer tent.



The barbecue dinners were a great success.



## Trinity UMC, Fairmont — Youth Mission Trip

On August 7, 12 youth and eight adults from Trinity UMC in Fairmont traveled to Marion, VA on a mission trip. Joining other youth groups at "Project Crossroads," they worked on substandard housing, cutting firewood for the coming winter and providing witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ to "Feed my sheep." Project Crossroads is an outreach ministry designed to address the basic needs of people in that area, and alleviate human suffering.



# Church developers explore United Methodist 'myths'

From the United Methodist School of Congregational Development

*This is the first in a three-part series covering topics explored at the 2008 UM School of Congregational Development.*

By Linda Green \*

UMNS - The notion that The United Methodist Church is dying has been repeated so often that it has become a belief, when in fact it is a myth, according to a church executive.

The reality is that the 11.5-million member denomination is poised for hope, said the Rev. Craig Miller. Miller led a class on church myths during the 2008 United Methodist School of Congregational Development.

Miller, a staff member of the United Methodist Board of Discipleship in Nashville, Tenn., is author of *7 Myths of The United Methodist Church*. He said belief in the myths prevents many churches from growing.

The denomination, through the UM Boards of Discipleship and Global Ministries, has embarked on an initiative to strengthen and revitalize existing churches and to start new ones. The school of congregational development is part of that effort.

The school used educational tracks, plenary gatherings and "teaching churches" to give the 300 people in Orlando and 150 at another site in Grand Rapids, Mich., strategies and ideas for creating and developing disciple-making congregations.

"It is a great joy to see how many of our bishops, district superintendents (and) annual conference leaders have become part of the school of



The Rev. Craig Miller addresses seven myths about church during a training event for church leaders in Orlando, Fla. UMNS photo by Cassandra Heller

congregational development to learn together, and it gives me great hope because as we learn together it will help us move deeper into this idea of change," Miller said.

Turning a church from slow death to vitality requires discipline, motivation and the faith that transformation can happen, he said.

The myth that the church is dying is also contradicted by the denomination's official statistics, which show membership increasing worldwide.

## Being connectional

Both a myth and a reality about United Methodist churches is that "we are connectional," said Miller. The church is connected institutionally, but people are not connected in their relationships with others, he said.

The clergy at the school of congregational development were asked if they prayed for the United Methodist church down the street and if they knew the leader or leaders in that

congregation. "It is about relationships with others," he said.

A third myth is that big churches are bad. The reality is that big churches—those 31 UM churches with 2,000 or more in worship—offer multiple experiences of grace, Miller said.

Of the 35,000 UM churches in the country, 47 percent have 50 or fewer people in

worship. Thirty percent of the total have between 50 to 119 in worship, and the rest have more than 120 in worship. "There is a suspicion about big churches," Miller said. "People question what it is about those churches that allow them to grow, or they question their theology."

But the large or mega-churches are examples of the principles of creating new congregations and other discipleship-making strategies, Miller said. In the last 10 years, mega-churches, regardless of denomination, have been growing because they offer opportunities encouraging people to come and develop their faith.

"The challenge for us is do we look to them with suspicion or is there something we need to learn from those churches that would allow us to flourish?" he said. Churches that make disciples are those that know their context or area, have a discipleship process for newcomers and offer multiple experiences of grace.

## Re-envisioning the church

Churches unsuccessfully seeking new members often verbalize a fourth myth that "there are no people out there." The reality is that there are plenty of people in the neighborhood,

but "they are just different from us," Miller said. A church must intentionally rebirth itself and re-envision itself to connect with people and help them connect with God, he added.

While churches do close or merge with others, the fifth myth is that "we have too many churches," Miller said. It is not that there are too many United Methodist churches, he said. The reality is that there are too many churches in the "wrong places" and "in the wrong era."

In the Western Jurisdiction, there is one UM church for every 37,000 people, one for every 6,337 people in the South Central Jurisdiction, one per 5,400 in the Southeast, one per 8,400 in the Northeast, and one for every 7,600 in the North Central Jurisdiction.

Miller said there is tremendous potential for the church to connect with the population growth expected across the US by 2030.

The growth is projected to be greatest in the South Central and Western jurisdictions, at 27 percent, followed by the Southeastern Jurisdiction at 26 percent. The North Central and Northeastern jurisdictions are projected to grow at 8 percent.

## Change must be embraced

The sixth myth is that "we don't know how to start new churches." At one time in its history, The United Methodist Church or its predecessor denominations started a new church every day. Currently in this country the denomination averages one church start every 7.6 days.

The reality is that the denomination knows multiple ways of starting new faith communities, Miller said.

While some new churches fail, others grow because they connect their discipleship systems, Sunday school and Bible study, with worship.

"It is a mistake to start a new church and not think of the systems to bring people in," Miller said.

The final myth is that people in churches do not want to change. Often, the church does want to change, but "it is the pastor that does not want to change or pay the price," he said. Effective congregations are led by leaders who welcome innovation and change, Miller said.

"As long as we live with this myth, nothing will change," he said. Churches that want change learn from others, learn with others and learn from mistakes, he said. They are passionate for God, for others and for God's vision.

\* Linda Green is a UM News Service news writer based in Nashville, Tenn.

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## Clergy explore Christian unity at Day Apart

By Para Drake \*

Guest presenters of the annual Bishop's Day Apart, Dr. Carl Braaten, Dr. Rollin Russell, and Dr. Gil Rendle, inspired some 400 clergy and guests to converge upon First UMC, Nashville, Monday, Sept. 15.

The focus of the gathering during the morning was to update the understanding of the ecumenical movement and the afternoon concentration was on the effects of cultural shifts upon local congregations.

Braaten, co-founder of the Center for Catholic and Evangelical Theology and Russell, director of the Christian Unity Committee of the NC Council of Churches, each presented a paper, both of which were followed by questions from a panel consisting of Dr. Belton Joyner, Dr. Bernice Duffy Johnson, the Rev. Edgar de Jesus, and the Rev. Donnie Jones.

The Rev. Paul Stallsworth, pastor of St. Peter's UMC in Morehead City, played a major role in arranging for Braaten and Russell to be presenters at the Bishop's Day Apart.

In addition to having Rendle address cultural shifts on Sept. 15, Bishop Al Gwinn also arranged for an expanded presentation with the Cabinet, conference Board of Laity, and Connectional Ministries staff on Sept. 16.

Russell's observations centered around the obstacles of unity and



L-R Panel participants were: the Rev. Donnie Jones, pastor of Aldersgate UMC in Chapel Hill and a former member of NCC Christian Unity Commission; the Rev. Edgar DeJesus, pastor of Mt. Zion UMC in Hurdle Mills and chair of the NCC Christian Unity Commission; Dr. Bernice Duffy Johnson, dean of the University College, NC Central University and former chair of the NCC Spiritual Formation Circle; and Dr. Belton Joyner, retired clergy and co-chair of the NC Episcopal-United Methodist Dialogue. (Photo by Bill Norton)

the revisions that have taken shape from the last century's emphasis upon "Conciliar Ecumenism" toward more effective bilateral talks between denominations. Braaten's definition of ecumenism, "bringing together different traditions," was followed by his observation that recent dialogues

have devolved into more stagnant and irrelevant exercises, called by some, "the work of the devil."

The 62 page document published in 2003, "In One Body Through the Cross: The Princeton Proposal for Christian Unity" argues that to oppose ecumenism is to oppose

Christian unity, based on John 17, "That all may be one, so the world may believe." Braaten argued that Baptism under-girds the unity of all Christians and that unity is eating and drinking at the Lord's Table. The problem, according to Braaten is "We cannot come together at the table."

Rendle, of the Texas Methodist Foundation, connected the cultural shifts taking place with the way many congregations understand their ministry. The shift from community values to individual values has brought a shift away from denominational identity and tradition handed down from generation to generation toward the practice of every generation finding its own way, "correcting the excesses of the previous generation." Local congregations expecting practices that filled their pews in the

See "Bishop's Day Apart," pg. 3



By John Gordon \*

Take more than 4,000 students and volunteers, add tons of rice and soy, then blend well for one day.

Those ingredients made for a record-breaking challenge as students from eight North Carolina colleges and universities joined together to pack more than a million meals for hungry people. The food is now en route to El Salvador, Haiti and India.

Stop Hunger Now ([www.stophungernow.org](http://www.stophungernow.org)), a Raleigh-based non-profit organization, held the Aug. 23 challenge on the campuses of North Carolina State University at Raleigh,

the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and East Carolina University at Greenville.

Volunteers came from schools throughout the area including: Meredith College, Peace College, Duke University, N.C. Central University and St. Augustine's College. Additional volunteers included scout troops, local churches, and families.

At NC State, the number of willing participants exceeded the facility's capacity and a waiting list was formed. Organizers developed additional community service projects to include the volunteers.

"We're really excited to be here and

hopefully we can make a big difference," said Mariana Chuck, a Duke University graduate student. "I think that people lose sight of what's going on in the world."

The need for food is critical, said the Rev. Ray Buchanan, a United Methodist minister and founder of Stop Hunger Now.

"World hunger is the biggest obscenity of our age," he said. "Right now, over 850 million—that's two-thirds of the world's population—goes hungry every single day."

The students set up funnel sta-

See "Million meals," page 6



# Updates on Disaster Response

## From Sam Dixon, deputy general secretary for UMCOR

"I ask for your compassionate response to help children and families in desperate need. Please give as you are able. UMCOR has mobilized teams of first responders in Haiti, Florida, Louisiana and Texas.

We are also working with local churches to assess long-term rebuilding needs. In addition to thousands of affected homes, many churches need major repairs or complete restoration.

Your gift will help provide emergency relief kits, flood buckets, fresh drinking water, building materials, as well as school kits for children.

Time is of the essence. Please act now. Bishop Huie [of the Texas Annual Conference] joins me in extending our gratitude in advance for your extravagant generosity."

Online gifts can be made at [www.givetomission.org](http://www.givetomission.org). Donations to support UMCOR's work can be mailed to: UMCOR, PO Box 9068, New York, NY 10087. Note Advance designation information on the memo line:

Hurricanes 2008, Hurricane Ike:  
Advance # 301969

Haiti Emergency, Advance # 418325

## NC Conference hurricane/ disaster response resource

For a one stop NC Conference resource on hurricane/disaster response, visit: [http://nccmission.org/hurricane\\_info\\_page.htm](http://nccmission.org/hurricane_info_page.htm).

MERCI Mission Center in Goldsboro needs flood buckets. The low inventory is a serious concern given the active Atlantic hurricane season. For more information on flood buckets visit: [http://www.merciumc.org/disasterkits.htm#UMCOR\\_Clean-up\\_Kits/\\_Flood\\_Bucket](http://www.merciumc.org/disasterkits.htm#UMCOR_Clean-up_Kits/_Flood_Bucket).

## Unable to help in Cuba

United Methodists are expressing frustration over not being able to provide disaster relief to Cubans hit hard by the 2008 hurricane season.

The Board of Global Ministries, which oversees UMCOR, has not been able to respond to damage from the hurricanes. The Board released a statement noting: "In 2006, the federal government failed to renew the license of the General Board of Global Ministries ... to send funds into Cuba for ministries of various kinds. Many other denominations have also lost their licenses."

MARCHA, the Church's Hispanic/Latinocaucus, is calling upon the Board of Global Ministries "to provide funding as soon as possible to the Methodist Church in Cuba so that it can continue and expand its ministry of relief and humanitarian aid to the victims of these hurricanes."

## Haiti recovery

UMCOR is responding to four catastrophic storms that tore through Haiti in less than a month. In a country with limited resources and widespread poverty, nearly one million people have been left especially vulnerable, noted Sam Dixon, deputy general secretary for UMCOR. UMCOR Haiti is on the ground responding with targeted direct assistance, and personnel that evacuated during the storms have returned safely. The office in Cap Haitien sustained minimal damage, and the staff is working in the North Department of Haiti, providing disaster relief for the short and long term.

## Hurricane Ike

UMCOR is in contact with the conferences affected by Hurricane Ike. UMCOR's domestic disaster response staff has been deployed to assist in the recovery. United Methodist Volunteers in Mission and UMCOR are coordinating the efforts of specially-trained early response teams

"The impact of Ike and other hurricanes on life and property extends from Haiti to Houston," said Bishop Janice Huie of the Texas Annual Conference.

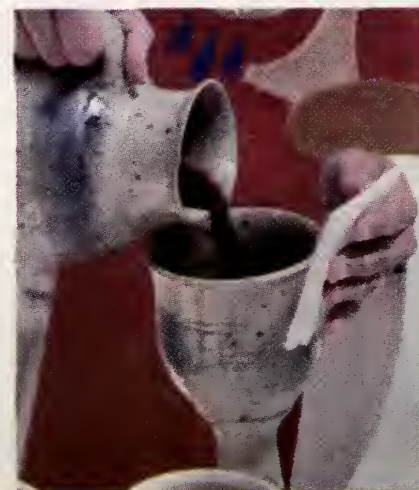
UMCOR is working with churches to assess long-term rebuilding needs. In addition to thousands of damaged homes, many churches need major repairs or complete restoration following the storm.



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# Lessons for the local church in ecumenism, organizational leadership

## A commentary

By Carol Goehring \*

What can the local church learn about Christian unity and cultural shifts from the practitioners who are widely recognized for their work in ecumenism and developments in organizational leadership?

Dr. Carl Braaten, Dr. Rollin Russell, and Dr. Gil Rendle offered insights into these topics during the Bishop's Day Apart on Sept. 15.

Braaten said "the ecumenical goal is that all may be one in Christ, through shared beliefs and ministries."

Russell said that ecumenism reminds us that God's ability to reconcile is greater than the ability to be divided by individuals. Much of the dialogue among denominations has occurred and bogged down at the judicatory level.

Many local congregations in the conference have worked together effectively in the area of Christian unity.

Dr. Belton Joyner, a panelist at the gathering, points to communities where these conversations already are taking place.

Grace Episcopal Church and Plymouth United Methodist Church in Plymouth have had talks and worshiped together.

St. Luke Episcopal Church and Bethany United Methodist UMC in Durham are beginning a six-month study of commonality and differences in theology, polity and ethos of the two denominations.

Episcopalians and United Methodists living at Croasdaile's Methodist Retirement Center have shared the stories of their faith journeys and have engaged in a series

of studies together.

The North Carolina Episcopal-United Methodist Dialogue has been going on since about 1992.

"Make Us One," is a resource Joyner recommended for conversations between Episcopal and United Methodist groups.

Such resources and conversations do not attempt to deny denominational distinctiveness; rather, they remind readers that God's ability to reconcile is greater than the ability to be divided.

Braaten said that the church's mission is inhibited and discredited when we emphasize our differences or compete for recognition in mission or ministry.

He said, "It is essential that ecumenism recapture the zeal of evangelism."

From Rendle, clergy learned that present-day culture requires leaders and congregations to change the way they think and act as a church.

He emphasized that the church today needs to face three questions.

See "Lessons in Christian Unity," pg. 6

## Bishop's Day Apart encourages leaders from page 1

past will be unable to make the connections people seek in the present climate of change.

Rendle said the current way of training and equipping the church is in a managerial system in a world that needs leadership.

He said that culture shifts now are very different from the ones into which earlier generations were born. Assumptions and world views today are very different. Leadership, Rendle said, is asked to satisfy all persons, an impossible task.

The United Methodist Church is vulnerable in this culture, asking the question, "Will our congregations choose to live in a changing world?"

Today's congregation must recog-

nize the "narrow margin" of life that exists in the changing culture, commented Rendle.

He said that people have less time to give to the church than ever before.

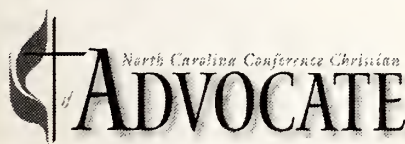


Dr. Gil Rendle

In this time squeeze, people are seeking "time-shares" for their spiritual quest rather than the long process of the past.

He suggested leaders must ask the right questions to discern God's plan and therefore the purpose of each congregation.

\* Para Drake is pastor of Core Creek UMC and an adjunct writer/former member the NCCC Advocate group.



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## "No Man Left Behind" leadership conference focuses on discipling men

By Rick Hebert \*

Sixty leaders from 16 area churches met Sept. 11-13 at St. James UMC in Greenville for the "No Man Left Behind" men's leadership conference.

The focus of the conference was to enable leaders to learn a successful model for discipling men in the church.

Conference leaders were the Rev. Charles Cooper of Orlando, FL and Ray Hilbert of Truth@Work Ministries, Indianapolis, IN. Both men are faculty members with Man in the Mirror Ministries, which co-sponsored the conference with the NC Conference United Methodist Men.

Key concepts learned at the conference were the No Man Left

Behind discipleship model developed by Man in the Mirror Ministries, the needs and wants of men, the five different types of men in a typical church, and the key foundations for a successful men's ministry.

Participants were able to develop their own men's ministry mission statement, and to receive feedback from the conference leaders and other participants.

Participants identified specific steps to develop a system that produces authentic disciples.

The "big idea" is that a church's discipleship system is perfectly designed to produce the results it is getting, or "if you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always gotten."

Pancake breakfasts and an occasional men's event just are not sufficient to help men change the core

affections of their hearts.

The "create-capture-sustain" activity cycle presented at the conference provides the engine to help move a man's faith to a deeper level.

The conference concluded with each church identifying the next steps to begin implementing the No Man Left Behind model, and participants being initiated into the Fellowship of the Red Bandanna, signifying a commitment to serve Christ for the good of others.

For more information about the conference, contact Rick Hebert at 252-355-8906, or by email: rhebert@suddenlink.net.

\* Rick Hebert is a member of St. James UMC in Greenville and active in UMM.



Participants and instructors during the No Man Left Behind conference at St. James UMC in Greenville are assembled outside the church, displaying the symbol of being a member of the Fellowship of the Red Bandanna.

## Pension board focus is on long-term

By Marta Aldrich \*

Pension leaders for The United Methodist Church are assuring participants that accounts are well-funded through a diverse portfolio of investments, despite losses during 2008.

Shaky U.S. and world financial markets have hurt investments of the UM Board of Pension and Health Benefits, the largest faith-based investor in the U.S. However, its leaders say the losses are less than the broad market aver-

ages, and they are preaching a "stay-the-course" philosophy to the 74,000 clergy and lay employees participating in their plans.

"We recognize and accept the cycles in the market," said David Zellner, chief investment officer for the agency. "But we have a disciplined investment process...in place for many years, and we stick with that process. We don't waver, and we do not panic. We take a very calm approach."

Zellner said the church's pension funds are positioned to weather such financial storms because of its "long-term investment philosophy of a measured, balanced, diversified approach to managing investments."

The board posted a Q&A report on its site at [http://www.gbophb.org/sri\\_funds/marketsept08.asp](http://www.gbophb.org/sri_funds/marketsept08.asp).

### Opportunity amid turmoil

Julianne Malveaux, an economist and president of UM-related Bennett College for Women in Greensboro, said this market is an opportunity.

"With more than \$15 billion [in investments] the pension board has an enormous influence to emphasize not only rate of return but also social and economic justice," she said. "Investors can change the course of corporate greed," for instance, by advocating against unfair compensation, balancing CEO bonuses with assistance to "the least of these" and pushing companies to be environmentally, economically and racially just.

"We need to make sure we're seen as a socially responsible investor that has a vision about what our nation looks like," said Malveaux.

## Transforming congregations workshop set for educators

The Rev. MaryJane Pierce Norton, associate general secretary for Leadership Ministries at the General Board of Discipleship (GBOD), is coming to the NC Conference to lead a workshop for Christian Educators on Nov. 6.

As an agency of The United Methodist Church with a focus on discipleship and congregational life, the GBOD hears about and sees where communities of faith are making a difference in the lives of individuals. Pierce Norton is an ordained Deacon in the NC Conference.

The cost for the day, including lunch, will be \$30 for non-members of the NC Chapter of Christian Educators Fellowship and \$25 for members. The event begins at 10am and ends at approximately 3pm and will be held at Daniels UMC, 2802 E. Ash St. in Goldsboro.

The deadline for registration is October 24. Registration brochures are available online at <http://www.nccumc.org/nccfnew/default.htm> by clicking on the title of the event, "Taking a Closer Look: Transforming Congregations."

The workshop is planned for all who have responsibilities in Christian Education or leadership development in the local church.

The emphasis for the workshop centers around one of Council of Bishops' Seven Pathways: "Transforming existing congregations to be more effective in ministries."

Using data obtained from the Romans 12 research project of GBOD, Pierce Norton will lead participants in examining the key points learned from this study and how those have contributed to transformation in congregations.

Included will be guidelines for leadership as well as practical suggestions for congregational life.

Pierce Norton is the author of several books, curriculum and articles including, "A Faithful Future: Volume 2: Keeping in Touch with God's People: Generations," "The Ministry of Christian Education and Formation," and "Your Baby Is for Loving."

Prior to her appointment as associate general secretary, Pierce Norton served as director of Families Ministries with the GBOD in Nashville, TN from 1997-2008 and other positions with the Board since 1981.

She also served as Director of Christian Education at University UMC in Chapel Hill.

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Caroline Farmer, deputy director at the NC Attorney General's Office speaks to the Scam Jam attendees about "Identity Theft, What you Need to Know" and how to avoid it. Hosted by First UMC, Elizabeth City, the event was designed to arm seniors against financial exploitation, Medicare fraud, identity theft, and exposure to dangerous criminals.

## Scam Jam at First UMC, Elizabeth City educates seniors on financial exploitation

Drawing participants from throughout the community, First UMC in Elizabeth City hosted a "Scam Jam" event on Friday, July 25.

This nurture, outreach, and education event was designed to arm seniors against financial exploitation, Medicare fraud, identity theft, and exposure to dangerous criminals.

"In opening the church to the community with warmth and attention to details, the forum was enhanced. More important the church hospitality and openness to the dangers of the dark side of life, sent a message of blessed welcome to all to consider issues of the day within the setting of the church," said Susan Scurria, director of the Albemarle Commission Area Agency on Aging.

Despite the seriousness of the subjects, the day's speakers were described as "dynamic" and "energizing" by participants.

Following an opening prayer led by the Rev. Mike Frieze, the presentations were given by:

- Starla Huggins, director of Government Relations for the State Treasurer's Office, who

talked about unclaimed property scams and instructed participants on how to locate actual unclaimed assets that might have been lost to citizens.

- Caroline Farmer, deputy director of the NC Attorney General Office, who shared examples of scams.
- Stephanie Bias of the NC Senior Medicare Patrol Program, NC Dept. of Insurance, who wove humor into her words of warning against specific scenarios that can lead to loss of insurance benefits and fiduciary assets.
- John Maron, of the NC State Treasurer's Office, who delivered an overview of investment fraud.

The Scam Jam largely drew an audience from the community so that 71 non-church members and members were in attendance.

This effort is an example of a partnership between church and state to enhance the lives of community members.

The event was the result of a collaboration between First UMC, the church's Nurture Committee-Nurses Resource Team, and the Albemarle

Commission Area Agency on Aging.

First UMC member and retired nurse, Lucinda Richardson, first conceived of the event after attending a similar program in Dare County.

"The efforts of the congregation in coordinating site details and being on hand to welcome attendees was truly impressive," said Scurria.

In addition, the state AARP office contacted church members for permission to publicize the event and set-up church points of contact.

Meals and on-site staffing were provided by the Agency on Aging.

Greg Tanner, associate state director of AARP, arranged for the event speakers.

## Russell is given additional responsibilities

Bishop Al Gwinn recently announced that the Rev. Tim Russell, Raleigh District superintendent, will take on the added responsibilities of assistant to the bishop and director of ministerial relations on Nov. 1.

The change was required following the assignment of Dr. Paul Leeland as bishop of the Alabama/West Florida Conference.

Leeland had served as assistant to the bishop and director of ministerial relations for Bishop Gwinn and former Bishop Marion Edwards.



Tim Russell

In making the decision, Gwinn said he considered the timing of the Cabinet-level appointment and the desire to have as little disruption as possible for

local church ministry, in addition to consultation with the Cabinet and the Raleigh District Committee on Superintendency.

He explained that appointing another pastor as district superintendent would mean a pastoral change for a number of local churches at a critical time in the life of a congregation. Gwinn's preference was to wait for the appointment changes

See "Tim Russell," pg. 6

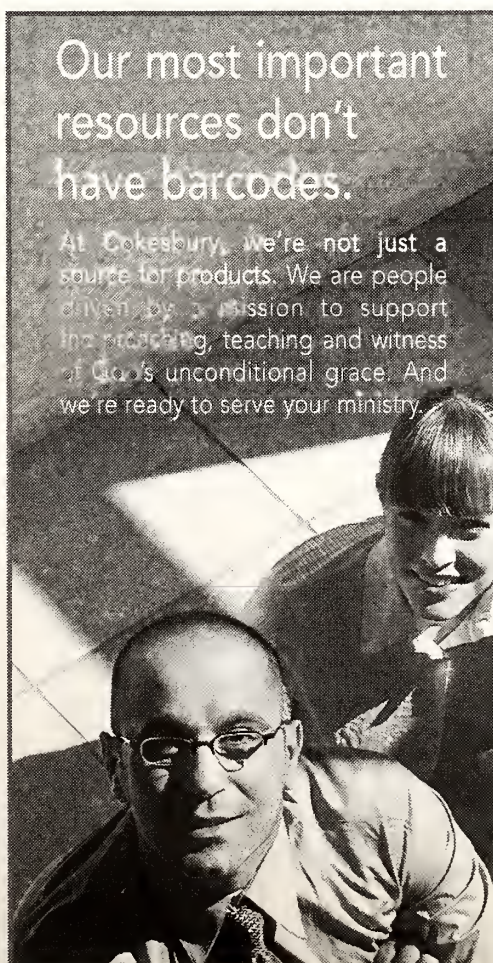
## North Raleigh UMC youth aid in revision of Teen Study Bible

Teens at North Raleigh UMC helped to update the number one selling Bible for teens, the NIV *Teen Study Bible*. Developed by North Raleigh church members Dr. Larry Richards and his wife Sue 13 years ago, the NIV *Teen Study Bible* has been used by over 3 million teens. "But the Bible badly needed revision for this new generation," said the Richards.

Youth at NRUMC along with others

completed questionnaires to help the authors take the pulse of contemporary youth and design new features, among which is a study guide anchoring The Apostle's Creed in key Bible Passages.

A host of features on contemporary issues help teens understand and live their faith as they rely on Jesus to guide them in the present and to shape their future.



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## Million meals from page 1

tions to fill plastic bags with rice, soy, a vitamin-fortified flavoring capsule that contains 21 vitamins, and dehydrated vegetables. When mixed with hot water, each bag contains a balanced meal that can feed six people. Each meal costs 20 cents to make.

Other students weighed, sealed and packed the bags and loaded the boxes onto trucks.

A gong rang each time 10,000 meals were packaged.

The University Million Meal Event went a step beyond providing meals to the hungry. It also helped raise awareness said the Rev. Steve Hickle, chairman of the board of Stop Hunger Now and pastor of Fairmont UMC in Raleigh.

"I think at least 4,000 volunteers are all getting a message of hunger and taking that to heart," Hickle said. "So it's like a whole generation of people that's been awakened to what they can actually do about world hunger—to help raise the funds and work with the delivery system that is in place and really have an impact."

Student Brittany Johnson, member of the Raleigh Wesley Foundation, said teamwork helped exceed the 1 million goal by more than 10,000 meals. The Wesley Foundation is a United Method-



ABOVE: Students load food boxes at NC State at the end of Stop Hunger Now's Million Meal Event. The food will be distributed to hungry residents in El Salvador, Haiti and India. A Raleigh-based non-profit, Stop Hunger Now was founded 10 years ago by the Rev. Ray Buchanan, a United Methodist minister.

RIGHT: Brittany Johnson, a member of Soapstone UMC in Raleigh stacks meal packets at NC State.

ist ministry for college students.

"There are so many people here that are just helping, and we get so much accomplished with everyone working together," she said.

Stop Hunger Now holds similar events, though on a smaller scale, at churches. With the help of students, churches and other volunteers,



RIGHT: Students work together to pack meals at UNC-Chapel Hill during Stop Hunger Now's Million Meal Event on Aug. 23.

Photos by John Gordon

## Methodist University hosting meal packaging event Oct. 29 to support Stop Hunger Now

Students, faculty, and staff of Methodist University in Fayetteville will partner with volunteers from United Way of Cumberland County to pack meals for Stop Hunger Now on Oct. 29.

Packing will begin at noon and end at 3:00 p.m. in the Student Union at Berns Student Center.

Up to one-hundred volunteers will pack each hour for three hours.

The project organizers have set two goals: Pack 30,000

meals in the Student Center for the Raleigh-based non-profit Stop Hunger Now; and raise \$6,000 to cover the project's expenses. At \$.20/meal, a \$1 donation will make five meals possible in poverty-stricken areas.

For more details, to volunteer, or to make a donation, contact the Campus Ministry Office at (910) 630-7157.

Sign-ups begin Oct. 10. Donations can be accepted through Oct. 29.



## Lessons in Christian unity from page 3

First, "Who are we?" This is a question of identity. The second is a question of purpose (or mission), "What do we do?" The final question is, "Who is my neighbor?" which is a question of context.

Rendle says that with less time, many people attend worship less frequently, but when attending, they value greatly the experience that connects them to God.

Trying to conduct the business of the congregation according to democratic process is not effective in today's culture because of attendance patterns. New ways of making decisions in the church must be explored, says Rendle.

The United Methodist Church has asked its leaders, both clergy and lay, to have good management skills. Management provides stability for an organization as it strives "to do things right."

Leadership, according to Rendle, brings change and often dissatisfies the system. Leadership values seek "to do the right things."

The message for the church is that "business as usual" will not accomplish the mission of the church today. Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world is a mission that requires leadership.

Openly discussing denominational differences with groups of other faiths and fully understanding the cultural shifts of recent years and the limited influence we have in changing the culture will help church leaders move forward in faithfulness and fruitfulness.

That gives us all something to talk about.

\* Carol Goehring is director of conference connectional ministries.

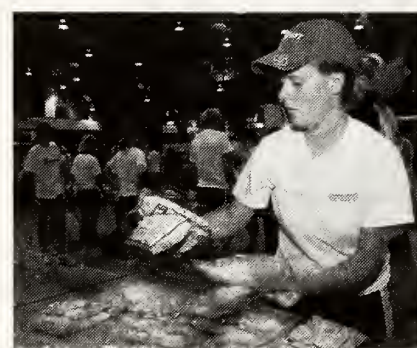
## Tim Russell from page 5

which follow annual conference.

He asked the Raleigh District pastors to assist in the time of transition, such as offering to lead Charge Conferences and in other ways.

In addition, Gwinn said he would assume more of the assistant to the bishop responsibilities while Russell works with ministerial relations and the Raleigh District.

The announcement was delayed until early September, Gwinn said, so he could personally explain the change to pastors and laypersons in the Raleigh District.



Buchanan believes the organization's goal is attainable.

"The vision of Stop Hunger Now is simply to achieve a world without hunger," he said. "We can do that—in our lifetime—if all of us simply will do what we can."

Actor Jesse Metcalfe, best known for his recurring role on the ABC TV drama "Desperate Housewives," also dropped by to encourage the students.

"Twenty-five-thousand people a day die from hunger-related illnesses," Metcalfe said. "There's plenty of food to feed everyone on the planet. So, you know, why is this not being done?"

Stop Hunger Now began feeding the world's hungry 10 years ago. In that time, the organization has sent meals to more than 60 countries.

The organization's previous record for a one-day packaging event involving college students was 300,000 meals.

"We're in the midst of an unprecedented global food crisis," Buchanan said. "There's been a perfect storm of factors that have come together that have created a global food crisis that is threatening millions more people."

Buchanan said an increased demand for beef and chicken in China and India, combined with ethanol production in the United States, has increased the demand for corn and driven up prices. The recent sharp rise in fuel prices also has increased the cost of providing meals to developing countries.

Event sponsors included Liberty Tax Service, Progress Energy, Skanska USA, and the United Methodist Committee on Relief.

\* John Gordon is a freelance producer based in Marshall, Texas.



# Celebrating the "Doers of the Word"

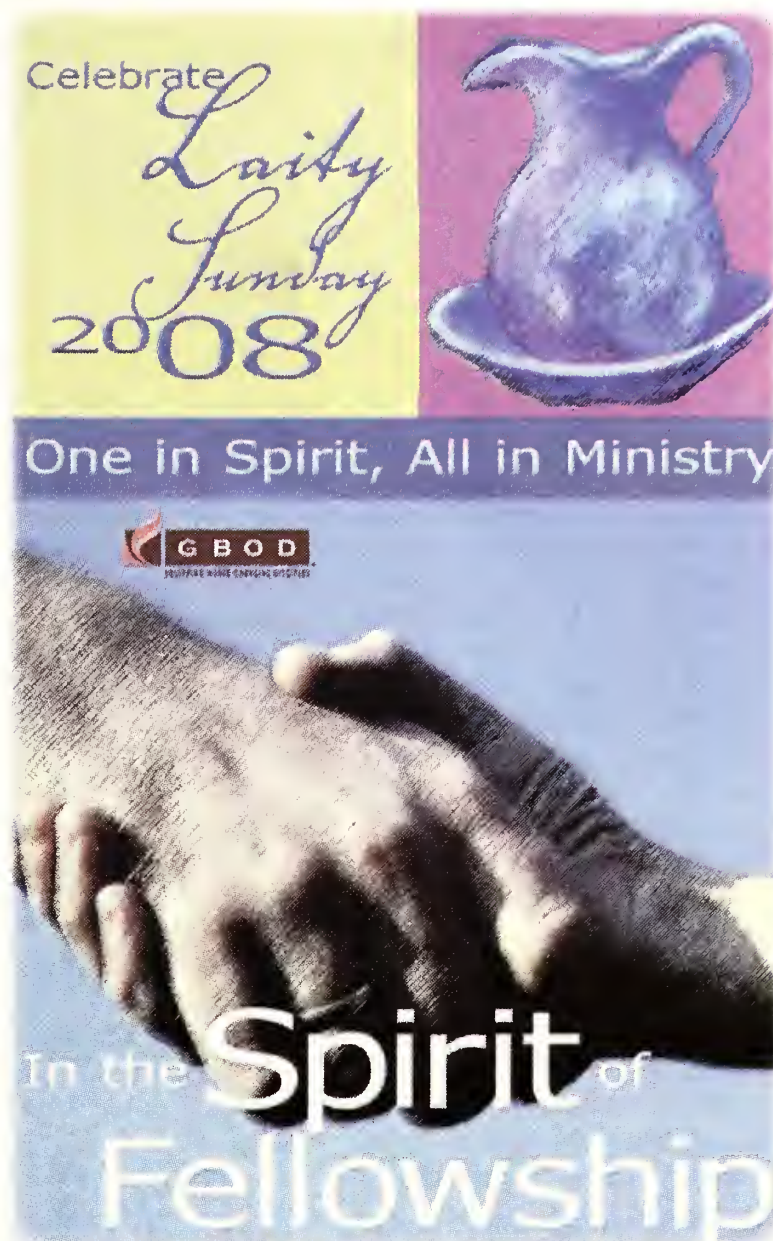
**Laity Sunday** is a day designed for the lay members of local congregations around the world to lead the worship services.

The day is set aside to recognize the ministry of laymen and laywomen who have heard and heeded the call. It is a day to lift up anew the invitation to the laity to serve as God's heart and hands in a needy and hurting world.

On this Sunday of honoring the "doers of the Word," the laity has an opportunity to hear once again the call to discipleship through the sharing of stories of acts of ministry and listening to the stories of others.

*This focus section of the NCC Christian Advocate honors just a few of the "Doers" who are active within this conference.*

*Their commitment to sharing the love of Christ touches the lives of people throughout the world.*



Foreground L-R: Analilia Gonzalez and Lucille Pescevic taste the food of Mexico at a recent "Language Bridges" cultural exchange social gathering at Edenton UMC.

## Lucille Pescevic – "Language Bridges"

By Charles K. Moseley \*

Think of ministry beyond the walls of the church building and you'll picture Lucille Pescevic, who, for the last seven years has been the heart and soul of an outreach ministry in Chowan County.

"Language Bridges" was formed in 2001 by advocates for the Hispanic community who saw a need to bridge the gap between the local culture and the culture of Mexico and Latin America.

Lucille and Lori Heginbotham, at that time a staff-member of Edenton

UMC, noted that the barriers created by differing languages not only separated the two cultures, but also limited the availability of good paying jobs to persons of Hispanic origin.

Together these visionary women devised a program to teach English as a second language to adult Hispanics with the additional objective of sharing cross-culturally with those who attended the classes.

The main and most important objective for Lucille has been to improve the quality of life for non-

See "Pescevic," pg. 10

## Melba McCallum - Rockingham District Partners in Ministry

By Leonard E. Fairley \*

One of the key elements of leadership is the ability to cast and live into vision. Melba McCallum embodies the spiritual courage, tenacity, and ability to hear a vision cast and immediately place it into context with the big picture of Kingdom work, particularly "making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world".

Melba sees and whole-heartedly buys into the fact that we serve a God of abundance not scarcity. This faith

serves Melba well in the Rockingham District which has countless economic challenges. Melba sees what others might consider problems as opportunities of witness to the power of a God of limitless possibilities.

She has certainly lived into the Rockingham District's vision statement: "See the Possibilities, Live the Promise"—especially in her role as director of Rockingham District Partners In Ministry (RDPIM).

RDPIM is an organization of "congregations working together in mission and ministry to accomplish together what no one church can accomplish alone." It is designed to be a team of volunteers committed to alleviating the many issues that affect the poor and oppressed in our communities.

A three-phase organization, the RDPIM seeks to advocate change in three areas:

- Ministry for youth and children
- Housing and repairs for substandard housing

See "McCallum," pg. 9





## Helen Little - A helping hand for the people of Haiti

By Mary Wagner \*

Big things come in little packages, but there's nothing small about the impact Helen Little is making around the world.

She runs circles around people half her age, and Helen will be the first to tell you that the word "retirement" is never mentioned in the Bible.

Helen works tirelessly for those less fortunate—locally, nationally, and internationally. A few of her efforts include raising money to purchase land for Liberian War Widows, educate and resocialize children forced to become soldiers in the Liberian civil wars, and support programs for sustainable agriculture in Africa.

She collects clothes to be shipped to Armenia, participates in Kairos prison ministries, and provides weekly Sunday School Services for a local nursing home. She has traveled to Russia to conduct VBS classes for children left to tend to themselves.

Her passion is Haiti.

Shortly after becoming a widow at age 53, Helen attended a program at her church given by Mission to Haiti.

Two years later, she traveled to Haiti and was stunned to see its abject poverty: little boys walk-

ing naked in the country, families living together in 12 foot wide huts, and people bathing in filthy ditch water.

She returned with a fire in her heart and has traveled to Haiti 41 times.

For over 20 years, Helen has gone to Haiti, raising money to build seven schools, four wells, one church and an orphanage. She has also collected, packed, and shipped four 40-foot shipping containers to Haiti, filled with furniture, clothes, gifts, school supplies, and food.

In her spare time, you might find Helen sewing dresses for girls in Haiti, visiting local clubs to solicit donations for her schools and orphanage, or driving to local yard sales to collect clothes and shoes to be shipped to Haiti.

Helen believes that the future of Haiti rests upon its children, and the only way to help Haiti out of its poverty is by education. The schools and the orphanage give an opportunity to children who would have no future—a hand up, not a hand out.

"If you had told me 25 years ago that I'd be doing this, I wouldn't have believed you," Helen confides. "I also would have been too scared to start."

\* Mary Wagner is a member of Horne Memorial UMC in Clayton.



Helen believes the future of Haiti rests upon its children. In the past 20 years, she has flown to Haiti 41 times, helping to build schools, wells, a church and an orphanage.

## Helping Haiti

Haiti is the poorest country of the western hemisphere, with an average lifespan of 53. Children often suffer from starvation and disease, and are frequently abandoned.

Recent surges in food prices, coupled with four storms in a month, have made the situation critical. Flooding killed over 300 people, and hundreds of thousands of people still lack basic provisions and food.

Horne Memorial UMC is collecting funds to help families recover from recent hurricanes. 100% of all funds will be used to buy food/livestock and rebuild stronger houses. All gifts are tax-deductible. To donate, make checks payable to Horne Memorial UMC and mail to PO Box 475, Clayton, NC 27528. Please mark "Haiti Relief- Ti-Goave" in the memo.



Barbara Garlock speaks to an audience of community, church and organization leaders at a "Bread For Our Neighbors Church Summit" held at Saint Francis UMC in Cary. (The Cary News Staff photo by Michael McLoone.)

## Barbara Garlock - "Bread for our Neighbors"

By Beth Hatcher \*

A single mother of four evicted from her apartment.

A brain cancer patient who must decide between paying his mortgage and covering a medical insurance premium.

A rural job seeker who needs a ride to an interview.

These are just some of the scenarios members of local churches discussed at a daylong summit in Cary. Hosted by Saint Francis UMC, the summit examined how churches can help meet the needs of parishioners suffering financial and other burdens.

Barbara Garlock with Saint Francis helped organize the event because Saint Francis, like many churches in the area, was having people just show up at its doorstep asking for help.

She wanted the summit to be a chance for church leaders to learn about all the different services offered in the county so that they could better help people in need. Church leaders from western Wake and beyond attended the summit.

"Jesus commands us to serve our neighbor," said Doug Lain, pastor at Wendell UMC. Lain said that requests at his congregation's food pantry this summer were double what they were last year. Lain was just one of several pastors who attended the event, along with officials from various Wake County public services.

The program included several speeches from people such as Willie Beachum of Wake County Department of Human Services, who alerted those in attendance about the services offered to people suffering financially.

Bob Geary, a writer with *Independent Weekly*, also urged churches to get more involved politically in speaking out on poverty. "Poverty

is not on the political radar screen," Geary said, noting that politicians at state, local and federal levels rarely address the issues of poverty during their campaigns.

Tom Moore, a member of Saint Francis, said that he was glad he attended the summit. An Allstate insurance agent, Moore said he sees some of his clients — including many white collar workers — suffering from the loss of jobs and other economic factors who don't know where to turn.

He said the summit gave him a ready list of resources that he can provide people who come seeking help.

Lain said that churches are often the first places that families turn to in times of need. "Our faith gives us hope for the future," he said.

\* Beth Hatcher is a staff writer with The Cary News. The article appeared in the September 16 edition of the newspaper. Permission was granted reprint the article and photograph in the NCCC Advocate.

## Seeking ways to help those in need

Saint Francis UMC member Barbara Garlock helped organize "Bread for our Neighbors" after recognizing that the church had already given out three times as much financial aid in 2008 than in all of 2007.

With an interdenominational gathering of over 90 participants, a significant component of the program was information and idea sharing among the churches.

"It was especially energizing to gather with others doing similar mission work and to share ideas. Several people asked that we do it again next year," said Garlock, who is an emergency assistance volunteer at Saint Francis.



## North Gates Charge helps feed the hungry in Gates County

By Cal Bryant \*

A food pantry on wheels...a novel idea that appears to be catching on in Gates County.

For the fourth consecutive month, the congregations of the North Gates Charge have noted a strong turnout at a program from the Food Bank of the Albemarle that brings food to those in need instead of vice-versa.

On a Thursday last summer, 100-plus individuals patiently waited for the free food distribution held at the Gates County Community Center. And this wasn't just run-of-the-mill food items. Included in the distribution were meats, bread and even dessert to go along with the normal staples of life.

"We never know what the truck will bring, but it's always good, quality food," said the Rev. Mike Askew who pastors the North Gates Charge serving the Gates and Corapeake communities of the county. The three-point charge includes Kittrell's UMC, Savage's UMC and Parker's UMC.

"We are blessed on what we are able to do, and we feel the families on the receiving end appreciate it," Askew added. "It's a chance to give something back to the communities in which we live and work."

The program is volunteer-driven and operates on donations from churches and private citizens.

At this particular distribution,

up to 25 volunteers, young and old, black and white, joined together for a common cause.

"Many of our volunteers will testify that they are the ones who are truly blessed," Askew said. "They are here to share with those in need."

The congregations contribute both volunteers and the needed funding. "We're responsible for helping to generate the funds," Askew said. "We feel that if the Lord wants us to do this, we'll find a way. My churches have been behind this program and we're asking other churches to join us. It's a chance for us to get out from behind the walls of our churches and help our community."

He said that the program, offset by contributions, costs \$5 per individual distribution. "If a person will give up just two fast food meals a month, they can help feed a family in need for an entire week," he stressed.

In addition to church members, lending a hand were several Gates County Boy Scouts, who helped take the bags to the recipients' vehicles.

"As adults, we see the faces of those in need each and every day," Askew noted. "But young people do not see those faces. This is a way for them to interact with those in need. It's a great lesson in life for all involved."

Askew explained that this program is relatively new to northeastern North Carolina. He said traditional



Volunteers from the North Gates Charge have found that "they are the ones who are blessed," reports the Rev. Mike Askew. The first three events, each held at a different public school in the county, saw up to 150 families benefit from the service. (Photo by Cal Bryant)

stationary food banks remain active in Gates County where those in need can still go on a regular basis.

"The idea here is to extend the outreach with a rolling food bank," he said. "The only requirement is that the recipients, in our case, must be Gates County citizens. It doesn't matter if they come here in an old, beat-up Volkswagen or a brand new Mercedes. If they tell us they are in need...if they are hungry, we will fill their needs."

Those receiving the food are asked to give their name, address and telephone number. Those facts serve a dual purpose...allowing the Food Bank of the Albemarle to track, by zip code, where the food is going and to allow Gates County volunteers to place a phone call to those receiving this service to relay information concerning the next distribution.

"This is still relatively new to us; we just started this in Gates County in May," Askew said. "But I think we've got a good system going."

The first three events, each held at a different public school in the county, saw up to 150 families benefit from the service. Within the region, the program has served families in Perquimans, Hyde, Currituck and Dare counties. The mobile food pantry made its first-ever stop in Bertie County later last the summer.

Askew said the eventual goal was to have the mobile unit visit every county in the Food Bank of the Albemarle service district monthly.

The program is a partnership between the Food Bank of the Albemarle and the United Methodist churches of the Elizabeth City District. For more information on the mobile food pantry, contact Askew at 252-333-8811.

\* Cal Bryant is editor of the Gates County Index and the Roanoke-Chowan Herald. This article was adapted from one originally published in August and is used by permission.

## McCallum - Rockingham District Partners in Ministry *continued from page 7*

Establishing a center for resources and referral

Under Melba's supervision and direction, the RDPIM is sponsoring a two-year Youth Empowered to Succeed program at a Youth Academy for 10 rising seniors. This academy was the catalyst for steering these youth into becoming productive leaders of the future.

These seniors in turn serve as mentors to future academy cadets for 2009. The RDPIM's Rockingham Outreach and Recovery (ROAR) has also been actively sharing the love of God through the repair of a home in Scotland County.

Plans are underway to open a Resource and Referral Center within the Rockingham District where those in need may go to find the appropriate channel to meet their specific needs.

When Melba accepted the role as Director of RDPIM, she spoke these words: "I am naive enough to believe in what pastors proclaim from the pulpit about God's possibilities for

our communities and our world".

Melba is married to Ben McCallum, and they have three adult children. An active member of New Hope UMC, among other offices, Melba has served as board chair, UMW president, lay member of the NC Annual Conference, and as a member of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee.

She served on the NC Conference task force that produced the Healthy Congregations program, and she recently led New Hope in the

"Healthy Congregations" Bible Study and MAP process. Melba also serves on the Conference Board of Laity and Board of Trustees.

Retired from public education, Melba served as vice president at Bladen Community College for eight years and prior to that worked at Richmond Community College for over 20 years.

She served the Rockingham District UM Women as president for three years and is the present Educa-

tion and Interpretation Coordinator for the Conference UMW. Melba also commissioned as the first deaconess in the Rockingham District, and possibly the first in the conference in 40 years.

She is quick to note that the things she accomplishes in God's name are not of her own doing, but that God simply uses her as a vessel to carry out his plans.

\* Leonard E. Fairley is the Rockingham District superintendent.

## Church Mice



Karl Zorowski

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## Pescevic from pg. 7

English speaking persons in the Chowan County community.

The results have been most beneficial to many new resident emigrants, and also for local residents who have been blessed by their introduction to the rich culture and traditions of the Hispanic people.

Lucille has stayed with the program since its inception, and in many ways she has nurtured and encouraged this ministry beyond the walls of the local church with singular devotion.

Currently the program serves approximately 30 Hispanic persons, and is shared between Edenton UMC, Chowan County Schools and the Center Hill UMC in Tyner with financial support from the Duke Endowment.

Lucille Pescevic—one Christian layperson who has made a difference in many others' lives.

\* Charles K. Moseley is pastor of Edenton UMC in the Elizabeth City District.

## Beth Sherron - Cross-cultural exchange in Africa

Beth Sherron, member of Walnut Grove UMC in Hurdle Mills was one of 15 United Methodist Women from across the United States who traveled to Mozambique, Africa in August to share in educational seminars with the Methodist Women's Society of Mozambique. The team was coordinated through General Board of Global Ministry.

American and Mozambican women shared in cross-cultural seminars on topics such as Prayer, First Aid, HIV/AIDS, Grief, Domestic Violence, Mozambican Women's Rights, and Creative Movement.

During the second week of their trip, the women visited UMC sponsored mission sites to meet residents, distribute donated goods, and hand out mosquito bed nets to aid in the fight against malaria. Mission sites visited included the Caroline Belshe Orphanage,

Tsalala Training Center and primary school, Cambine Mission Station and Hanhane Shelter for Dispossessed Women.

The team also met retiring Bishop Joao Machado and incoming Mozambique area Bishop Joaquina Nhanala, the first female Bishop of Africa.



L-R: A resident of the Hanhane Shelter for Dispossessed Widows stands with Beth Sherron, member of Walnut Grove UMC in Hurdle Mills. Hanhane is a shelter established by the Mozambican Women's Society for older women cast out by their families and accused of witchcraft.

Women from the US and Mozambique gathered for cross-cultural sharing seminars.



## SEJANAM honored for 11 years of work in Bolivia

The Southeastern Jurisdictional Agency for Native American Ministries (SEJANAM) received special acknowledgement as part of a celebration of the Red Cross Center in Montero, Bolivia.

Over the past 11 years, SEJANAM has worked at the Montero Red Cross Center to complete an emergency room addition and offering economic assistance to bolster work efforts.

SEJANAM has also supported other projects at the Methodist

School, Cochabamba Medical Clinic, and Methodist churches.

"The recognition truly came as an unexpected blessing and magnificent surprise," stated SEJANAM Executive Director Darlene Jacobs. "Dr. Dardo Chavez [Medical Director of Andean Rural Health Care] possesses enormous forethought, passion and perseverance, which is contagious. SEJANAM is blessed to be part of his vision and dream."

In addition, recognition for out-

standing leadership and contributions was given to former SEJANAM Executive Director, Dr. Robert Mangum and wife Neila and to the SEJANAM Mission Work Team coordinator, Wade Hunt.

Wade Hunt was honored for his leadership of the work team construction projects, which began from the foundation of the medical clinic.

"You are part of the foundation of this facility and have given unselfishly and generously of your time and talents to the Red Cross Clinic, as well as other building projects within the greater area of Montero. It is because of the kindness and love of people like you that the people of Montero

can receive medical care...," said the President of the Montero Kiwanis Club.

The final award was given in honor of Rev. Dr. Robert Mangum and his wife Neila. The Bolivia Mission Ministry began under the direction and leadership of Dr. Mangum.

The foyer of the Red Cross Medical Clinic will now bear the name 'Rev. Bob and Neila Mangum' in honor and deep appreciation of their humanitarian efforts and for having started the construction of the Mother's Birthing Center for 'the service of the people that need it the most.'

A summer work team headed for Montero, Bolivia July 25-August 8. Of the 16 team members, five were new. The work team represented three denominations.

In addition to construction efforts, the team offered a new oral hygiene ministry and distributed food, clothing, educational expenses, and housing assistance for targeted families.

This year's team members included: Ava Bland, Circle of Christ UMC; Dr. Jesse Lamm, Chestnut UMC; Wade Hunt, Wilbur and Angela Harris, Peggy Hunt, Patricia Locklear, Carrie M. Jones, Fedelia Locklear, Taylor Deese - all members of Prospect UMC; Trenette Deese and Jordan Deese - members of White Hill Baptist Church; Kaye Brown and Paula Garrison, Daubs Chapel UMC; Erickson Jacobs, Sandy Plains UMC; and Darlene Jacobs, Circle of Christ UMC, Lake Junaluska.

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# "If we say that we have fellowship with him

while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin." (1 John 1:6-7, NRSV)

By Sandy Jackson \*

In the *Renovaré Spiritual Formation Bible*, "fellowship" is defined as: "Engaging with other disciples in the common activities of worship, study, prayer, celebration, and service, which sustain our life together and enlarge our capacity to experience more of God."

In the Scripture passage cited above (1 John 1:6-7), there is a caveat to this form of fellowship: walking in the light as he is in the light. If one wants true fellowship with God and neighbor or fellow believers, one cannot walk in darkness.

To remain in the light, each must be intentional about spending time with God in prayer and in searching the Scriptures and by practicing the other means of grace, such as worship, Holy Communion, fasting, works of mercy, and holy or Christian conferencing.

*Koinonia* is the Greek word for fellowship or community. Acts 2:42 describes the *koinonia* that existed among believers as they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship and the breaking of bread and the prayers.

All who believed were together and had all things in common. When *koinonia* is genuine, the believers are connected and in solidarity or unity.

Hebrews 10:23-25 (NRSV) says, "Let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together." Psalm 133:1-3 reminds us, "How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!"

Today one's kindred go beyond one's family. They include those who also believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

**Those who walk in the light are the light of Christ wherever they go. And when walking in this light, the fellowship with one another deepens the experience of God.**

Much is heard about fellowship in the church. Churches even have "fellowship halls," in which to "fellowship."

But fellowship has a deeper meaning when the importance of meeting together to encourage one another to love and good deeds is recognized.

The United Methodist heritage has

at its roots an emphasis on meeting together to give an account of faithfulness. Early Methodists met in societies, classes, or bands in order to pray together, hear a word of exhortation or encouragement, and "watch over one another with love."

Not only did these meetings provide a time of fellowship, but they provided the strength needed to live lives of personal and scriptural holiness.

Today there are plenty of meetings to attend in the church, but are they times of fellowship? Is there a spirit of holy conferencing?

Is the time taken at those meet-

ings to worship together, pray for one another, and encourage one another?

What an opportunity is missed by holding a meeting with bookend prayers and not experiencing the unity that true fellowship can bring.

The chance to "walk in the light" can be missed if it is forgotten whose work is being done and when the focus is only on the business at hand, not on how God's will for the work can be discerned.

What change might occur in our churches if every meeting time was an intentional time of Christian or holy conferencing?

What changes might be seen in the

unity of the body of Christ? How do can all walk in the light of God?

Walking in the light occurs when devotional practices are carried out faithfully, when others are cared for as Christ commanded, and when meetings bring people together in fellowship and mutual accountability.

Those who walk in the light are the light of Christ wherever they go. And when walking in this light, the fellowship with one another deepens the experience of God.

\* Sandy Jackson is the Director of Lay Leadership Development for the General Board of Discipleship.

## Laity Sunday Worship Resources

Ministry of the Laity, General Board of Discipleship  
<http://www.gbod.org/laity/>

Worship Resources for Laity Sunday  
[http://www.gbod.org/laity/articles.asp?item\\_id=46170](http://www.gbod.org/laity/articles.asp?item_id=46170)

## A Prayer of Thanksgiving

O Lord, our God,  
you are the light  
of the world. Thank you  
for bringing us  
out of the darkness  
into your marvelous light.

We thank you  
for walking with us  
and for the fellowship  
that we have  
one with another.  
Keep us in the Light.  
Amen.

Sandy Zeigler Jackson

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November

# adult BIBLE STUDY

Based on the scripture lessons of Cokesbury's Adult Bible Studies series.

With appreciation, the NCCC Advocate honors Belton Joyner as he completes his seventh year and over 350 adult Bible studies.



By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

## November 2, 2008

Text: Ephesians 4:1-16

### "Fitting Into the Community"

When the Olympics opening ceremony unleashed the summer games last August, there were several indications that there were some tears in the fabric of Olympic unity.

In the ceremonial parade, North Korean and South Korean teams marched separately. There was a coolness to the welcome given to the Sudanese athletes as visions of Darfur stirred in the memory bank.

Commentators observed that no women were allowed to participate in Saudi Arabian sports.

The world is a broken place.

And then there is the Church. Do we do much better than the fissures seen in the Olympic vision of a common globe?

We find ourselves divided by economic condition. We find ourselves divided by worship styles. We find ourselves divided by theological subtlety. We find ourselves divided by sexuality. We find ourselves divided by social and political attitudes.

If this seems like a harsh perspec-

tive, consider this: If you have Communion on this first Sunday of the month, look at the Table on this first Sunday in November.

Who is missing from the Table? Why do they not feel welcomed to the Lord's Table in this particular place? What keeps the missing from being present?

For whatever comfort it is, we are not the first to find separating lines drawn through our Christian experience. The writer of Ephesians made a plea for unity in the Spirit of Christ (Ephesians 4:3). This unity does not come because we are all the same; it comes precisely for the opposite reason. Unity comes when each gains from the gifts of the other (Ephesians 4:7, 11). I am incomplete without you, and I am bold to say that you are incomplete without me.

The writer of Ephesians gives five examples of gifts that God gives (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers—4:11).

Note that the gifts are such that some are apostles, some are evangelists. Unity is not in all of us having the same gifts. Unity comes when each uses the gift he or she has for the good of the whole body of Christ (4:16).

Unity is not something that is automatic. Look at the words that tell us how we come to unity: speaking (4:15), grow (4:15), joined and knit (4:16), equipped (4:16), growth (4:16), and building (4:16). The biblical call is to "make every effort" (4:3).

The biblical call is to "bear with one another" (4:2) as we are in differing stages of the journey. The biblical call is to recognize that our unity is in the one we have in common, Jesus Christ (4:5).

### What Someone Else Has Said:

Brian McLaren (*Generous Orthodoxy*, Zondervan) has written: "... You can only know the unity of the church by believing it, not by seeing it...Perhaps the more we believe in and perceive that unity, the easier it

will be to grow beyond the disunity."

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Lord of us all, of us all..."

## November 9, 2008

Text: Galatians 2:11-21

### "Conflict in the Community"

When persons are baptized, the United Methodist liturgy shows two dimensions of being in this new relationship with Christ.

1. "Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of the world, and repent of your sin?"
2. "Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior, put your whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as your Lord...?"

In classic theology, this is called *apotaxis* (those things we put away) and *syntaxis* (those things we put on).

Paul addresses these two issues in this week's study lesson.

What do I have to put on in order to follow Christ? Do I have to put on Jewish rituals and practices?

What do I have to give up in order to follow Christ? Do I have to stop trying to do good works?

For us, these might seem like "slam dunk" questions.

Of course, we do not have to follow Jewish practices in order to follow Jesus. Of course, we do not have to stop doing good works if we accept Christ by faith.

For those to whom Paul wrote, it was not quite so clear. Peter himself went back and forth in answering the question about whether or not to follow Jewish laws (Galatians 2:12).

Paul recognized that some might slip into sin thinking that how they lived their lives hardly mattered now that Christ had justified them (Galatians 2:17).

What about us?

Are there customs and traditions and practices that we insist that all follow in order to be followers of Christ? Are there broken places in our lives that we allow to continue because we know Christ will forgive?

Charles Wesley put it into perspective when he wrote: "Let us plead for faith alone, faith which by our works is shown; God it is who justifies, only faith the grace applies."

Salvation is indeed by faith in Christ (Galatians 2:16). However,

note how verse 17 begins "But if, in our effort to be justified in Christ..." If we think that being justified by faith in Christ sets us free from faithful living, we have missed becoming the transformed people to which our Lord invites us.

### What Someone Else Has Said:

In *The Ethics of Sex* (Harper and Row), Helmut Thielicke wrote, "It is very often difficult to draw the line between security grounded upon the responsibility of faith (naturally, this too exists, since faith does not exclude but rather includes reflection upon the consequences) and the need for security that grows out of unbelief."

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin "O God, the Giver of grace that is sufficient, the Source of the good works that proceed from faith, the Author of the tomorrow that is good, we give thanksgiving for faith that will not let us go..."

## November 16, 2008

Text: Philippians 3:17-21; 4:1-9

### "Communion with God in the Midst of Struggle"

Wouldn't you like to know what got Syntyche and Euodia bent out of shape? All we know is that Paul urged them to get their act together and "be of the same mind in the Lord" (Philippians 4:2).

Only three times does Paul (in the words of the King James Version) refer to persons as ones who "labored with me in the gospel" (4:3). Those three persons are Syntyche, Euodia, and Timothy.

Timothy? Wow! In the New Testament accounts, these women are in pretty good spiritual company! (Those who would give women a second-place to men in kingdom life must have missed this passage.)

Whatever has divided these two persons of faith is not enough to have Paul think they have lost their saving relationship with Jesus Christ. He still asserts that their names are written in the "book of life" (Philippians 4:3)—one of the biblical images of eternal life with God (Daniel 12:1, Luke 10:20, Revelation 3:5).

Perhaps, then, we can conclude that the differences between Syntyche and Euodia are just some of those pesky little things that work like a

See "Bible study," page 14

### Let's Journey To... Oberammergau May - August 2010

The first Passion Play was held in Oberammergau in 1634, in fulfillment of a vow to perform the "drama of the sufferings and death of the Lord" every ten years, if the pestilence that ravaged the village would ease. Now, more than 375 years since the first performance was made, the vow continues to be fulfilled. YOU can join people from all corners of the world as they converge on the little town in Southern Bavaria to witness the spectacular drama. Call Today

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Jerry and Elton Hendricks

## Elton Hendricks honored for 25 years of service to Methodist University

By Maria Sikoryak-Robins \*

Monday, Sept. 15 marked Dr. M. Elton Hendricks' 25th anniversary as the third president of Methodist University. A small reception was held in the lobby of Reeves Auditorium. Of all of the presidents and chancellors serving at four-year colleges and universities in North Carolina, Dr. Hendricks' is the longest tenure. He is a retired elder and a clergy member of the NC Conference.

In his 25 years of service, Hendricks has brought about growth and change at the school.

"When I came to Methodist College in 1983, day program enrollment was below 600," noted Dr. Hendricks. Total enrollment in 1983 was only 771. The primary focus of his leadership at (what was then) Methodist

College was on the "educational possibility for which we were created." Enrollment now, in 2008, is 2,118.

Under Dr. Hendricks' continued leadership, the University has plans for a new football field house, the William F. Bethune Center for Visual Arts, and a \$2.5 million physical expansion of the Physician Assistant Program.

Methodist University is an independent four-year institution of higher education with over 2,100 students from 41 states and 30 countries. Methodist University offers over 70 majors and concentrations, three master's degree programs, and 19 NCAA III intercollegiate sports.

*\* Maria Sikoryak-Robins is the director of University Publications for Methodist University, Fayetteville.*

## UM Men's programs seek to help all men grow in Christ

UMNS - With its goal to "help men know Jesus Christ," the Commission on United Methodist Men must reach out beyond its chartered local church chapters to connect with a wider range of men, say its leaders.

"Our goal is to help men grow in Christ so others may know Christ," said the Rev. David Adams, who was re-elected top staff executive of the commission during the recent meeting of its board of directors.

"Churches should hold the charter of United Methodist Men because the charter includes all men of the church. Our focus should be outward, not inward. We need to be invitational and provide many entry points for men," he said.

These entry points include mission trips, teaching opportunities, Bible studies, home repairs and scout troops. "Don't tell men what to do," Adams said. "Invite them to action."

Celebrating its 100th birthday

this year, United Methodist Men is a ministry to and through all men of The United Methodist Church in the United States.

It has 239,000 members in its chartered chapters, but wants to reach all men among the church's 7.9 million U.S. members.

Earlier this year, the commission reported to General Conference, the church's top legislative assembly, about a survey of United Methodist men citing a "lack of interest in religion" as the top reason the church does not reach more younger men.

To help churches cast a wider net, the commission is training "men's ministry specialists" and soon will begin a program for "scouting ministries specialists."

This effort will be supported by "teaching churches" that will provide training and resources for other churches wanting to enrich their ministries to men.

## calendar ANNOUNCEMENTS

### UMM Rally coming to St. Paul UMC, Goldsboro on October 25

The NC Conference United Methodist Men are focused on training men to assume more active and effective leadership roles in their local church. Clergy and laymen are invited to the annual UMM Rally.

The featured speaker is General John W. Handy, a graduate of Methodist University and a Christian leader and speaker. He will unveil leadership at the highest level in the nation, followed by an open and candid question and answer session. Lunch will be provided at a cost of \$10 per person. Communion will be served by the Rev. Charles Cook.

Go to <http://www.nccumc.org/docs/umm.pdf> for more information.

### 2nd Annual Great Pumpkin Run

The Great Pumpkin Run in Jamestown is a family-friendly event set for October 25. The event includes a 5K run and a 1 mile walk. First-time runners are welcome! The proceeds from the run support DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministries of NC, Inc. Jamestown UMC is the event host. For details and registration information, visit [www.nccumc.org/events/punkin](http://www.nccumc.org/events/punkin).

### Cyberspace, cybersafety, cyberministry workshops

Clergy, staff, and key leadership in local churches are invited to attend. The cost is \$5 per person (nonrefundable) and a church group's registration must be received 10 days prior to the event the group plans to attend. The brochure with more information and registration form is available at [www.nccumc.org/childnmin/cybersafety.pdf](http://www.nccumc.org/childnmin/cybersafety.pdf). The remaining workshop date is Nov. 15 at Edenton UMC-Edenton. Registration is from 9:15-9:30 A.M. and the program will run from 9:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M.

## conference CALENDAR

### October

- 4 NCC Historical Society Meeting, 10am-noon; NCC Commission on Archives & History 1-3pm ;Trinity UMC, Durham
- 11 UMW Conference Annual Meeting; Methodist University; Fayetteville
- 16-18 Lay Academy of Christian Witness, Camp Rockfish
- 25 UMM Annual Rally, St. Luke UMC: Goldsboro
- 25 The Second Annual Great Pumpkin Run 5K Run and 1 Mile Walk to benefit DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministry, Jamestown, NC
- 29 Planning for a Lifetime of Ministry-The Middle Years Seminar; Hayes Barton UMC: Raleigh

### November

- 6 Taking a Closer Look: Transforming Congregations workshop with Mary Jane Pierce Norton for persons in areas of Christian education ministry
- 7-9 Pilgrimage; Crown Coliseum in Fayetteville
- 7 UMW Church Women United World Community Day
- 8 Conference UMW DO-IT Day; Pine Valley UMC: Wilmington
- 13 Academy for Leadership Excellence Workshop; 10am-3:30pm; Edenton Street UMC; Raleigh
- 15 Shepherding 21st Century Sheep; Cyberministry & Cybersafety; Edenton UMC, Edenton, 9:15am-12:30pm
- 21-23 UMW Leadership Training Event

For more information on upcoming North Carolina Conference events, visit the conference web site at [www.nccumc.org](http://www.nccumc.org) and click on "Calendar" at the top of the page.



# November adult Bible study *continued from page 12*

small pebble in the shoe to make life uncomfortable, even difficult.

Faithful life is tough enough without sisters (and brothers) squabbling within the household of faith.

It is as if Paul is saying "Stop that bickering! There are enemies of the cross so we need to be unified (4:18)." It is as if Paul is challenging "Stop that bickering! There are those concerned only with gluttony and sexual indulgence so we need to show a different kind of life (4:19)." It is as if Paul is offering a reminder "Stop that bickering! You know better and you need to do those good things you have learned (4:9)."

Paul's letter to the church at Philippi would likely first have been read at the gathered worshiping community. (Only then would it have been circulated for others to hear.) How do you think Syntyche and Euodia would have felt to have their division used as an illustration before the whole congregation? Their splintering spirits were probably no secret from the rest of the Philippian church. Maybe the congregation was even choosing up sides. Maybe Barney Fife was Pauline when he used to say on the Andy Griffith Show, "Nip it in the bud!"

#### What Someone Else Has Said:

Christopher Webber (*Welcome to the Episcopal Church*, Morehouse

Publishing) has written: "Uniformity of opinion and vision might be more comfortable to some, but unity is made up of diversity."

#### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Bind us together, Lord..."

## November 23, 2008

**Text: 2 Timothy 2:1-3, 4:1-5**

#### "Witness of the Community"

Paul speaks of entrusting the gospel message to faithful people who will be able to teach others (2 Timothy 2:2).

It is hard to read these texts without thinking of people in my own life. I know who many of those people are in my own journey, and it would embarrass them for me to name them publicly. What I do not always know is who influenced and shaped the faith journey of those who influenced and shaped me.

Who influenced and shaped those who influenced and shaped those who influenced and shaped me?

Who influenced and shaped those who influenced and shaped those who influenced and shaped those who influenced and shaped those who influenced and shaped me?

Who influenced and shaped....and

soon we are back to these very early believers who heard what Paul had to say. What a remarkable way God has of spreading the good news!

Faithfulness to the core gospel message is not easy when those around us have decided to settle for a partial gospel truth, "accumulating for themselves teachers to suit their own desires" (4:3).

For example, it is not easy to proclaim a story that includes a cross when some will settle for a gospel that offers only prosperity.

For example, it is not easy to tell of a Savior who will "judge the living and the dead" (4:1) when some will settle for a gospel that has no ingredient of judgment.

For example, it is not easy to be patient in witnessing and teaching (4:2) when some have no place for companionship with those who are in different stages of the journey.

Paul's final summons to Timothy is "do the work of an evangelist" (4:5). There is something interesting about the words "evangelist" and "evangelism."

The Greek words for evangelism and evangelist are formed from two words: *eu* (which means good) and *aggelos* (which means messenger). The fascinating (and frightening) thing is that the word *aggelos* is most often translated "angel." Timothy is being asked to be an angel of the good!

Are you prepared to be an angel? Sometimes angels show up when we do not expect (or recognize) them (Hebrews 13:2). I wonder if sometimes angels do not know they are angels!

The angels in my life no doubt would not claim that distinction, but they have been faithful messengers of the good news and in my book (and in the Book) that makes them angels!

#### What Someone Else Has Said:

Chuck Smith, Jr. and Matt Whitlock (*Frequently Avoided Questions*, Baker) write: "Every Christian is an advertisement for the faith."

#### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Use me, Lord, even me..."

## November 30, 2008

**Text: 2 Corinthians 11:17, 21b-30; 12:9-10**

#### "Persecution Within the Community"

Dizzy Dean said "It's not bragging if you can do it." Keep that in mind as you read this week's boasting by the apostle Paul: "But whatever anyone

dares to boast of—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast of that" (2 Corinthians 11:21). And he does, speaking of a solid background, of labors, imprisonments, floggings, lashes, shipwrecks, beatings, stoning, and all sorts of dangers. (What came to my mind was, "Indiana Jones, eat your heart out!")

Garrison Keillor once said of some folks in Lake Wobegon, "They were ostentatious in their modesty."

We cannot accuse Paul of such modesty! Yet, the apostle says that all these things about which he boasts are described only to show just how weak and vulnerable he is. He shows how weak he is in order to show how strong Christ is.

Most of us would have a hard time conjuring up enough personal persecutions to make even a modest boast about our vulnerability.

Nevertheless, there is within most of us an overwhelming sense of inadequacy. Inadequacy as a parent. Inadequacy as a spouse. Inadequacy as a Christian witness. Inadequacy as a caregiver. Inadequacy as a learner. Inadequacy as an athlete. Inadequacy as a friend. Inadequacy as a peace-maker. Inadequacy as a Bible student.

Then, boom! Here comes Paul's great testimony: "But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.'"

The lesser places in our lives give Christ room to show forth his presence. But take note: Paul's list is not of fake humiliations, false modesty, unreal self-denial. His entire list is made up of things that were done to him, not things done by him.

He did not go out looking for persecution and difficulty. A false humility only presents a false self to our Lord. That is not where our Lord brings his power. The real weak places in our lives: those are the places where Jesus Christ can show forth power.

#### What Someone Else Has Said:

In the book *In a Pit with a Lion on a Snowy Day*, Mark Batterson (Multnomah Books) writes: "Worship is forgetting about what's wrong with you and remembering what's right with God. It is like hitting the refresh key on your computer. It restores the joy of your salvation. It recalibrates your spirit. It renews your mind. And it enables you to find something good to praise God about even when everything seems to be going wrong."

#### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of grace, God of presence, God of power, we confess our need of your grace, of your presence, and of your power..."

## CLASSIFIEDS

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,** NC United Methodist Camp & Retreat Ministries: The board of directors of the NC United Methodist Camp & Retreat Ministries (UMCRM) seeks a dynamic and experienced Executive Director to lead a growing camp and retreat ministry that provides transformative life experiences to children, youth, and adults. UMCRM seeks to provide opportunities for young people to learn about themselves, their relationship with each other and most importantly, their growing relationship with God. Chartered in 1992, the ministry owns and operates three camp and retreat centers in eastern North Carolina – *Don Lee* in Arapahoe, NC; *Rockfish* in Rockfish, NC, and *Chestnut Ridge* in Efland, NC. For a complete position profile and to learn about this dynamic ministry, visit [www.ncumcamps.org](http://www.ncumcamps.org). Click on the "Executive Director Search" link at the top right section of the home page. To apply, email a cover letter, resume, references, and salary requirements to [umcrm@amapag.com](mailto:umcrm@amapag.com) or mail to: UMCRM Transition Committee, c/o Armstrong McGuire & Associates, LLC, P.O. Box 6485, Raleigh, NC 27628.

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# Around the CONFERENCE



## Church Activity Building Groundbreaking — Beauty Spot UMC, Rowland

Beauty Spot UMC in the Purvis Community of Rowland, recently held a groundbreaking service as they begin the construction of a church activity building. With a projected cost of \$300,000, the new facility will be joined to the existing education and fellowship building. The pastor is Dr. Jimmy Cummings.



## NC Wesleyan President visits UM Foundation

Dr. Stanley Craine, interim president of N.C. Wesleyan College and college development officials recently visited with United Methodist Foundation officials and other guests in the United Methodist Building in Raleigh. The Foundation organized the gathering as a way to introduce Dr. Craine to the Legacy Partners program. Shown following the meeting are (L-R) Malcolm Woodall, NC Wesleyan vice president of development; Dr. Craine; Lynn James, UM Foundation executive director; Dr. Reggie Ponder, chair of the Legacy Partners; and Kristen Ward, NC Wesleyan associate director of development. (Photo by Bill Norton)



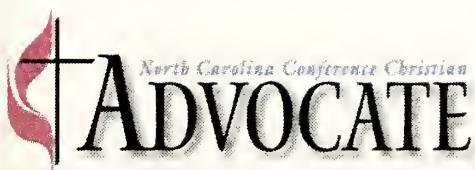
## 112<sup>th</sup> Homecoming — Mt. Hermon UMC, Creswell

Mt. Hermon UMC in Creswell and the Rev. Dalma Cribb, pastor, celebrated the church's 112th Homecoming for the congregation on Sunday, Aug. 31. The guest speaker for the day was the Dr. Belton Joyner. Immediately following the morning worship service, everyone present was invited to join in the annual homecoming fellowship meal.

## BIRTHS

Caleb Joseph Lear was born to Heather (Raleigh: Highland UMC, associate) and Casey Lear on July 30.

Joshua Byrd Singleton was born September 12 to Marcus (Durham: Granville-Vance charge) and Rosslyn Singleton.



## Submitting Around the Conference Information

Items for consideration can be emailed to [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org). The deadline is the 5th day of the month prior to publication. All articles and photos are subject to editing. Photographs or art should be recorded in the largest size and highest resolution possible. Send in JPG or TIFF formats. Please send articles and photos in separate files. Photos should not be embedded in articles or in photo viewing programs.

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# 'Change is good,' pastor tells church developers

## From the United Methodist School of Congregational Development

*This is the second of a three-part series covering topics explored at the 2008 UM School of Congregational Development.*

By Mary Beth Coudal \*

In a video, the face of a pastor is pasted onto the dancing body of Napoleon Dynamite, the title character in a cult comedy movie of 2004.

People under 30 would appreciate the image; those over 40 might not, said the Rev. Mark Beeson, who used the clip to introduce his address to the 2008 United Methodist School of Congregational Development.

His topic: "Innovate or Die."

The point throughout the animated presentation was that the church should not fear changing ministries to reach young generations.

If the church does not reach the young people of today, it will not have much of a future. "Change is good," he said.

The pastor of Granger (Ind.) Community United Methodist Church, Beeson spoke to two audiences: one

gathered in Grand Rapids and one by satellite link in Orlando, Fla., as part of the six-day school.

"It's unbelievable the changes in technology and what it has done to us," Beeson said. "We no longer learn in a linear fashion. ... Everything is story and image."

The Gospel and the mission of the church never change, he said, but the church must find strategies that will engage postmodern people to help them take the next steps toward Christian discipleship.

Punctuating his point that change is good, Beeson said the church expects people to change when they accept Christ.

"The whole world doesn't go to church," he said. "You have to give them a reason (to come). Give them a why. ... Help people take their next steps towards Christ. ... Is your cause worth the price of change?-because you're asking people to change."

The School of Congregational Development is held annually to bring together United Methodist pastors, administrators and laypeo-

ple to become catalysts for church renewal and growth.

The event is sponsored by the United Methodist boards of Discipleship and the Global Ministries.

Ministry tracks focused on new church starts, church renewal and outreach to ethnic and minority populations.

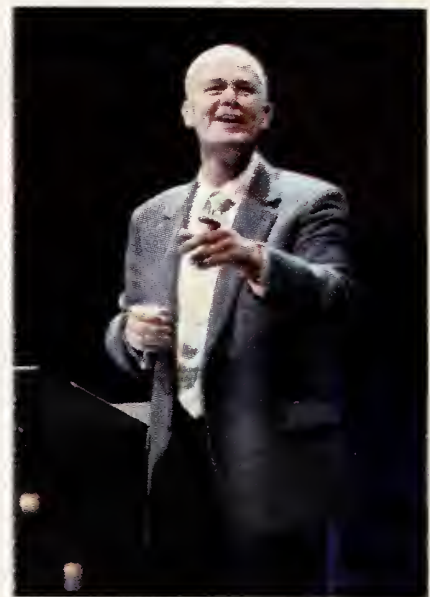
In speaking both of new church development or older church revitalization, Beeson put heavy emphasis on vision, mission and the question "So what?"

"Mission is why you exist," he said.

Beeson founded the Granger church 22 years ago, and the congregation now has a membership of about 5,000 and weekly worship attendance of about 6,000 in multiple services.

He encouraged other pastors to challenge members to use their best talents for the Gospel.

"Most of the people in our churches are under-challenged," he said, recalling a woman who led a multimillion-dollar company but was only asked to usher once a month by her church.



Mark Beeson

"We do not challenge high-capacity people enough," Beeson said. "Most people would rather be swallowed by a whale than bitten to death by small fish."

\* Mary Beth Coudal is a staff writer for the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries.



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# North Carolina Conference Christian ADVOCATE

Volume 153 / Number 11

November 2008

ADVOCATE  
focus

**ZOE Ministry**  
Giving Hope to Orphans in Africa

## Welcoming friends from Rwanda

All are invited to meet and hear the stories of hope from ZOE Ministry. "From No Hope to Giving Hope" will take place from 4-5pm on Sunday, Nov. 9 at Asbury UMC in north Raleigh.

Speaking will be Jean Damascene, a young man who was left to care for his three siblings at age 12 following his mother's death, and Epiphany Mujawimana, the founder of ZOE Ministry's Giving Hope Empowerment Project which gave Jean and his family a new start after their long struggle.

Read ZOE's Stories of Hope Pages 7-10



LaNella Smith, Ann Davis, Sandra Croom, JoAnn Barbour, and others newly elected leaders of the NC Conference United Methodist Women light candles during the installation service. (Photo by Bill Norton)

## Conference UM Women gathered in October

By Ann Davis \*

The NC Conference United Methodist Women met at Methodist University in Fayetteville on Oct. 11. Approximately 525 women and guests attended the 36th Annual Meeting. The Rockingham District served as meeting host.

The business session opened with the awarding of the 2007 Book of Reports to Goldsboro District President, Georgia Pilkington. For over 25 years Pilkington has shared her many talents with her local unit continuing through the conference level. She has taught mission studies, participated

in programs and portrayed women Bible characters. She currently serves as assistant dean of School of Christian Mission.

Melba McCallum, conference education & interpretation coordinator, led the Candle Burning ceremony along with the 12 district counterparts. The cost for one minute was \$36. Each district lit a candle that represented the amount of dollars collected and the number of hours that each candle burned in honor or in memory of a special loved one.

Nell Laton, scholarship chairperson, reported that nine women received scholarships. Seven women will attend Methodist University and two will attend Duke Divinity School. The total amount awarded

was \$10,000.

The following mission accomplishments were celebrated:

- Seven districts received special awards.
- The Reading Banner was presented to the Raleigh District.
- The Sanford District was the recipient of the Study Jewel.
- Four districts were recognized for the organization of new units: Elizabeth City, Fayetteville, Raleigh, and Wilmington.
- The Sanford District reorganized one local unit.
- In recognition of the Mission Today program, 40 local units received Gold Certificates for their completion of 20 out of 21 possible items required to achieve the gold status.

The 2009 budget was presented by Sandra Mendell, conference treasurer, and approved by the voting body. The Pledge to Mission for 2009 is \$440,000. The funds are generated from the 19,593 local unit members.

Kyung Za Yim, former president of the Women's Division installed the 2009 slate of Conference officers: President - Ann Davis; Vice President - Theresa Hodges; Secretary - Sandra Croom; Treasurer - Sandra Mendell; Social Action Coordinator - JoAnn Barbour; Education and Interpretation - Melba McCallum; Membership, Nurture and Out-



The president of the Fayetteville District United Methodist Women pins a corsage on former conference president Ruth Cade. Other former presidents receiving corsages were Jeanne Rouse, Jane Johnson, Tibbie Roberts, and Jimmie Shuler.

(Photo by Bill Norton)

## Caregiving clergy need self-care, too

By Reed Galin \*

The morning sun glares off a rural road in North Carolina, where the Rev. Chuck Cook has worked up a pretty good sweat.

He leans into a 17-mile-an-hour breeze of his own making, shoulders hunched forward. It is a deliberate attack on the open road in front of him-and on the years behind him.

The occasional passing motorists would never suppose the slender cyclist in a neon lime jersey is 58 years old. Even when he stops peddling to talk, the former Marine's squared jaw and the calm intensity beneath his pointed riding helmet suggest a much younger man.

Cook works hard to be an exception in The United Methodist Church, where data from medical and disability claims indicate the church has a health problem among its U.S. clergy.

"Generally, I think it's quite difficult for pastors to engage in regular physical activity," he said.

See "UMW," page 14

See "Health initiative," page 5

PERIODICALS

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Robbie Barrett (left) presents a check to John Farmer, director of Camp Don Lee, to build a cabin at Don Lee. (Photo by Bill Norton)

## Barrett family makes gift to Camp Don Lee for new cabin

A gift of \$100,000 has been given to Camp Don Lee by the Barrett family for building a cabin in memory of the late Rev. Troy James Barrett and in honor of Robbie Williams Barrett.

The Barrett Cabin will be 1280 square feet and will house 24 sleeping spaces. It will have an inside restroom and full handicap access. The cabin will be heated and air conditioned for year-round use.

"The generous gift is an invitation to others to celebrate with the Barretts by adding their labors in the

construction of this cabin," said John Farmer, director of Camp Don Lee.

Troy and Robbie Barrett, along with their sons, Jim, Bob, and Bill and their families have spent many happy hours as campers and counselors at Don Lee. Jim serves on the conference camping committee.

Troy Barrett served as a clergy member of the NC Conference for 40 years. He died on July 9, 2007. Robbie is administrative assistant to the conference assistant to the bishop. She has served in that office for 22 years.

## "Peace Matters" coming Dec. 6 to Chestnut Ridge

"Peace Matters: Proclaiming the Prince of Peace in a World of Violence" is a one-day gathering designed to embody the practices of non-violence through conversation, community networking, interactive Bible study, worship and Eucharist.

Individuals and families of all faith traditions are welcome to participate.

The gathering will take place at Chestnut Ridge Camp & Retreat Center in Efland on Saturday, Dec. 6 from 8:15 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The registration fee of \$15 per adult/high schooler and \$10 per child includes snacks, lunch and

all conference activities.

Childcare and age-appropriate activities will be provided for pre-school through middle school age students by Chestnut Ridge staff. Pre-registration is required.

Small group conversations will be facilitated by Jason Byassee, Jonathan Wilson Hartgrove, Steve Taylor, Ken Carder, David Stark, Jared Hansen.

To register, go to [www.campchestnutridge.org/content/view/104/126](http://www.campchestnutridge.org/content/view/104/126) for an online registration form or mail checks to Chestnut Ridge Camp and Retreat Center, 4300 Camp Chestnut Ridge Rd., Efland, NC 27253.

**PEACE  
Matters**

## Unity Dialogue extends invitation

By Carol Goehring \*

The Unity Dialogue was established in 2002 in the North Carolina Conference, to bring a small group of lay and clergy United Methodist Christians together to engage in conversation about homosexuality.

After more than 20 years of debate in the Annual Conference, in local churches, and in communities across the Conference, the issue still has the ability to polarize people who otherwise share a desire to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

The dialogue has been meaningful for the participants, who say they have grown in wisdom and understanding of the many perspectives on the issue of homosexuality. They have practiced "holy conferencing," respectfully

listening to one another even as they disagree about the matters of sexual orientation and practice.

The dialogue is moving out of the Methodist Building, inviting others into the conversation. On Sunday, Nov. 16 from 3-5pm, Centenary UMC (140 E. Market St., Smithfield) will host the Unity Dialogue, with members modeling "holy conferencing" around the issue.

New participants will join the conversation that explores the biblical word, the church's traditional teaching on the subject, and recent decisions of the General Conference.

All who are interested may join the conversation. Centenary is providing the meeting space free of charge.

\* Carol Goehring is executive director of conference connectional ministries and serves as staff to the Unity Dialogue.

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# Hurricane recovery help needed in Texas; NC Conference congregations encouraged to take a special offering

By Steve Taylor \*

For Johnnie Howard, the week had begun like any other, working at his job not far from the home he had lived in for 33 years of his marriage. His son helped him build this house. His father had died in this house. The life of his family in all of the joy and laughter and hardship and weeping was connected to this house.

But as he stood in the house, surrounded by the destruction that flood waters bring, his feet caked in the fetid mud that covered his floors and furniture, the smell of rot assaulting his nostrils, he knew without a doubt that the connection of his family life to this place was now dead.

Few had expected the small creek that was a five minute walk from his back porch to become a raging monster. Few had expected such destruction from the torrential rains of the Category 2 hurricane. And as he stood weeping—afraid and alone—few expected that life would ever return to normal.

Yet it did. For following Hurricane Floyd in 1999, when 51 North Carolinians lost their lives and so many others found their families displaced and their homes destroyed, United Methodists responded.

## Order from chaos

Thousands of volunteers descended upon the NC Conference and began to create order from the chaos and proclaim hope amidst the crushing reality of devastation.

Other United Methodists sent funds, donated materials, and prayed. And for Johnnie Howard and hundreds of other members of United Methodist congregations in North Carolina, miracles were birthed in the hands and feet and lives of other United Methodist brothers and sisters from around the world—even when few would have expected such an outpouring of love.

## Focus on Texas

Now, United Methodists in Texas who face many of the same struggles, are bearing the same loss, are suffering similar trauma, and like Johnnie Howard, they too feel alone and forgotten. They too wonder if anything will ever be the same again. It would seem that their doubts have merit, for as Bishop Huie of the Texas Conference recently noted, "For communities recovering from Hurricane Rita just three years ago, Ike's blow threatens to overwhelm their sense of confidence in the future. In addition, the economic uncertainty in our



United Methodist Bishop Janice Riggle Huie and the Rev. Donald Waddleton assess storm damage and recovery needs in Surfside Beach, Texas. Huie oversees the Texas Conference and its more than 700 churches. Waddleton is superintendent of the conference's South District.

response to this disaster will change lives and re-shape futures for Jesus Christ." Johnnie Howard would second that.

## A special offering

On Nov. 2, churches in the conference are encouraged to take a special offering for Hurricane Ike relief. Gifts can be made for hurricane response through several venues:

**By Sunday Offering:** Note on the offering, Hurricanes 2008 UMCOR Advance #3019695, and place the gift in the offering plate.

**By Check:** Make checks to NC Conference and mail to NC Conference/Raleigh Area, The United Methodist Church, PO Box 60053, Charlotte, NC 28260-0053. Mark the envelope and check: Attn: Hurricanes 2008 UMCOR Advance #3019695.

**By Credit Card:** Call toll-free (800) 554-8583. For more information, please see: <http://new.gbmgm-umc.org/umcor>.

\* Steve Taylor is conference director of mission and justice ministries.

nation and world is eliciting anxiety in almost everyone."

Bishop Huie continued, "It is still too early to have a good number, but I fully expect our donations will be down. Folk outside of Houston/Galveston/Beaumont are wondering, 'What hurricane?' I'm preparing for the worst, working for the best and hoping for at least somewhere in between."

Hundreds of structures have been damaged, many completely destroyed. Thousands of people have been displaced. Many will not return to their homes in the near future, if ever. Over 200 UM structures sustained some damage.

## An open appeal

In an open appeal, Bishop Huie stated, "We need your generous financial support to deal with catastrophic expenses in communities and congregations."

"We have learned a great deal in the last three years. For example, we have learned that volunteer hours double every dollar given to recovery. We know that the early response of The United Methodist Church invites other groups to engage with us and stay committed to long-term recovery. Whatever you give in time and money is multiplied many times over."

Even though the damage was immense, many United Methodists remain resolute. One of Galveston's largest churches, Moody Memorial UMC, had significant roof damage.

Yet even with part of the roof missing, one could read on its website, "Still Standing to Serve." Though the floors of the church were buckling and tarps covered the building, the church served approximately 3,000 meals each day to returning Galveston residents, providing ministry and support for those whose lives were so severely altered.

While United Methodists continue to struggle on in the Spirit of Christ, they are still in deep need. Materials will be in short supply for

rebuilding. Costs will likely go up and there will be great need for funds. Many congregations suffering from having displaced members will experience a drop in attendance, at least in the short-term. Pastors will need help with their salaries for the next few months, a time when there will be a desperate need in the affected communities for increased spiritual support. This will be a time requiring essential support from the North Carolina Conference, and such support will make a difference.

As Bishop Huie noted, "I am confident that your joy, patience, prayer, hospitality and generosity in



For over four decades, Greensboro College has united with the community in an Advent tradition.

The 43rd annual Festival of Lessons & Carols will take place December 7 at 7 p.m. in the Hannah Brown Finch Memorial Chapel. Members of the community enjoy music and scripture lessons surrounded by lighted luminaries on campus. The service was introduced to Greensboro College in 1966 and was inspired by the annual Christmas Eve service held at Kings College Chapel, in Cambridge England.

Following the service, the new Nativity Scene will be unveiled. Beneath star-filled trees, a panorama of 21 figurines depicting the entire Nativity story will unfold across the hillside.

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# Conference Connectional Table meets following restructure

By Bill Norton \*

During the first meeting following a restructure and election of members, the Conference Connectional Table (CCT) met Sept. 24 to review the past four years, begin to organize around a new structure, and move into a specific focus for each quarterly meetings.

Emily Innes, as conference lay leader, chaired the meeting. Participating in the presentations were Carol Goehring, conference connectional ministries executive director, and Bishop Alfred Wesley Gwinn, Jr.

Bishop Gwinn defined the table as the "engine that drives the vision" and "the Holy Spirit is the power that drives the engine." He also said it is "a crucial body" in the conference.

"We are determined here in North Carolina to live in the 3 L's, L to the third power," Innes said and defined the 3 L's:

1. Seek to Love God – "We will encourage one another;"
2. Learn together – "One component of every meeting will be that we are learners, determining how we can be most effective;" and
3. We are going to Lead – "We are doing adaptive leadership and we will be accountable to one another."

During the devotion, Carol Goehring said "culture shifts have made this time and this place to be very different. This is a great time and a wonderful time for us. God has given us a vision. God is at work in impossible times."

## NC Conference Vision Statement:

**"Healthy Congregations and Effective Leaders in Every Place Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World."**

Innes pointed out that under the former structure there were five circles. The new structure, with the Conference Connectional Table at the center, has four teams of ministry: Outreach, Christian Formation, Leadership, and Stewardship. Communications has a presence on each team for information and understanding of the work of each team. Visit [www.nccumc.org/connectionalministries.htm](http://www.nccumc.org/connectionalministries.htm) for more detail.

Changing the structure was not to solve any problems, Innes said. It was done to "simplify the language and create compact teams moving out to empower the local church."

Core values cited for the table and the teams are:

- Prayerful discernment and worshipful work centered in Christ
- Clarity of purpose in meetings
- Covenant to be prepared, present and to participate fully
- Value diversity
- Build trust to embrace differences of opinion and move toward consensus
- Ongoing evaluation of measurable outcomes

Each team should meet quarterly. Each meeting will have a

specific focus: Visioning, Strategic Planning, Budget and Evaluation.

Innes said during the growing and discovery stage of the new structure where some specifics are developed, some of the meeting topics may need adjustments. Each team will compile budget requests from groups related to the team. Each team would bring all budgets to the Connectional Table for adoption before going to the Conference Council on Finance and Administration (CF&A).

The teams should have budgets compiled by late January.

"We believe we have an assignment from God and that assignment must be focused. We cannot be running in many different directions. We have to be moving together," Bishop Gwinn said.

"We live the assignment out in many different ways. No congregation is like the other. No group is exactly like the other. We all function within the vision, we focus our attention," Bishop Gwinn said.

"One of the wonderful things about focusing—it is hard and it has been frustrating. When God is trying to pull us forward there is much fuzziness there," he said.

Making disciples is not an end in itself—all of us are in the process of becoming disciples, he said, and challenged CCT members to use leadership in the making of disciples through reproducing leaders, by multiplying, and by building-up or encouraging.

Included in the learning portion of the meeting, the

CCT received a presentation on video by Andy Stanley, senior pastor and founder of Point Community Church in Atlanta, GA on Making Vision Stick.

Stanley said that three things that make vision stick are 1) Casting it strategically (pick the right time and repeat the vision in different ways), 2) Celebrate it systematically (all are vision casters. Talk about the vision in clear and compellingly clear ways), and 3) Live it continuously (embody it, make it part of life).

"Life is brutal on vision, and if we can force ourselves through the pain in life, the three words reverse. If you live it, you will celebrate it and then that celebration will cast the vision. If we do, the vision will begin to stick," Stanley said.

A second video used at Charge Conferences in the Burlington District was also shared with the CCT.

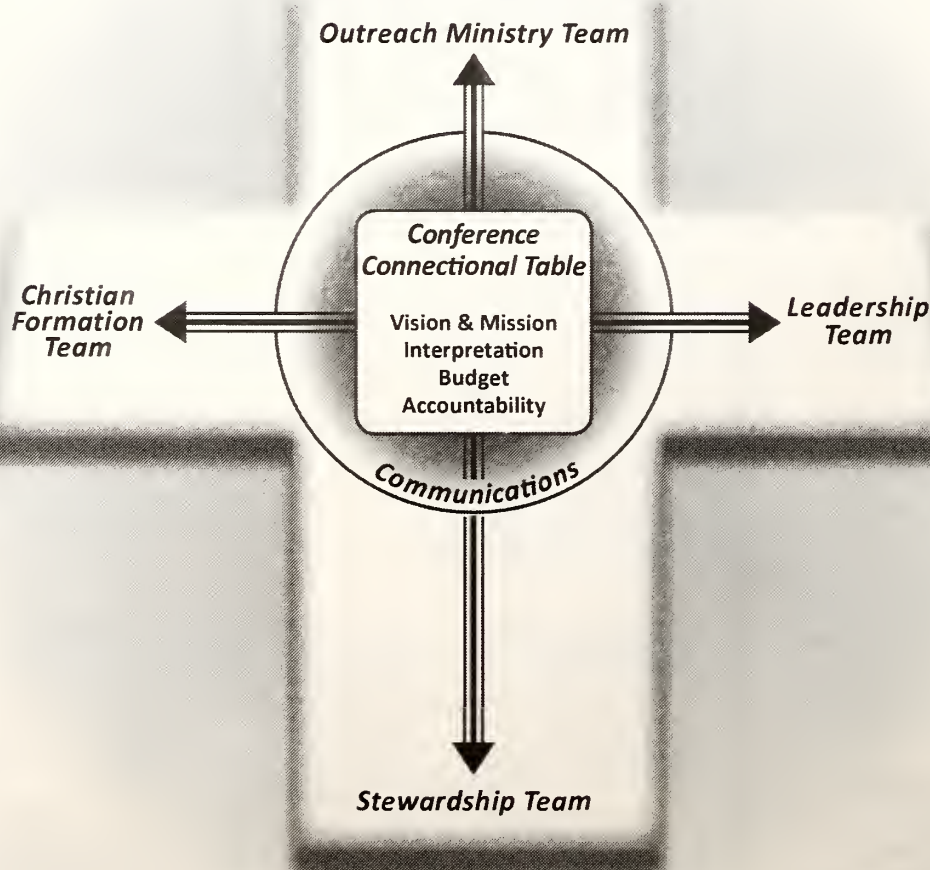
Innes concluded the meeting by announcing that the primary focus for the CCT meeting on Dec. 1 will be on strategy, on Feb. 23 it will be dealing with budget issues, and May 11 will be visioning.

\* Bill Norton is conference director of communications and editor of the NCC Christian Advocate.

## The Seven Pathways

*The Council of Bishops identified Seven Pathways to focus on while making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.*

1. Transforming existing congregations  
Revelation 1-3
2. Developing new congregations  
Acts 1:8 and Acts 16:9-10
3. Strengthening clergy and lay leadership  
Philippians 3: 13-14  
2nd Timothy 2:14
4. Teaching Wesleyan model of reaching and forming disciples of Jesus Christ  
Matthew 28: 19-20
5. Reaching and transforming the lives of new generations of children  
Matthew 19:14  
Acts 2:39  
Proverbs 22:6
6. Eliminating poverty in community with the poor  
Deuteronomy 15:7  
Luke 10
7. Expanding racial / ethnic ministries  
Acts 10:28





## Health initiative *from page 1*

As a district superintendent overseeing 68 United Methodist pastors, in the Goldsboro District, Cook has begun facilitating Weight Watchers programs for colleagues and support groups for their physical, emotional and mental health.

The efforts are encouraged by a new emphasis on health and wholeness under a statewide Clergy Health Initiative launched in 2007 by United Methodist-related Duke Divinity School (see article this page.)

### 24/7 lifestyle

Project director Robin Swift says extensive surveys and data indicate that the 24/7 nature of clergy demands leaves little time for pastors to minister to themselves. The resulting stress is an exacerbating factor.

"When people first heard about this, they thought we were going to make everybody lose 30 pounds and take pie away from every church supper," Swift said. "We really want to reinforce that we know that health is much broader than that."

Many possibilities are under consideration. Duke could provide personal trainers, health club memberships, equipment, group and/or individual therapy, spiritual direction, marriage counseling, financial counseling—"pretty much the whole universe that has to do with the health of body, mind and spirit," Swift said.

She believes the key to success is not to prescribe what will be offered or established, but to help individual pastors design their own health programs with the kind of help they actually will use.

Cook is among the first to directly benefit from the initiative. He participated in one initial offering—an intense weekend of physical and mental evaluation and counseling.

Even with his pre-existing dedication to fitness, the experience helped

him to modify his exercise approach and his mental outlook. He wants his colleagues to benefit as well.

"The most important thing is that it has allowed us to put physical fitness and spiritual fitness on our calendars as an appointment that should be honored just like any other appointment and can't be broken," he said.

### Setting boundaries

The institutional recognition of her profession's health challenges will change the Rev. Mary Lou McElray's life, she believes, as well as make her a better pastor at Center UMC in Sanford. McElray and her husband live in a parsonage that is physically attached to her church.

It's symbolic of a profession that is unique in its lack of personal or professional boundaries.

"There's always an illness or an accident or marriage in crisis," she said. "You have someone who's suffering. You want to be there for them and really need to be fully present. You focus all your energy on your congregation and end up putting your own needs on the back burner."

Over time, with too many bake sales and barbecue dinners (after all, this is North Carolina, she jokes), and too little exercise and self-discipline, McElray gained about 100 pounds and developed stress-related diabetes. Along with the pressures of the job, personal finances are always an issue, and her performance is constantly evaluated by parishioners and supervisors.

"We judge ourselves so harshly, how many new families came to the church and the pressure of I need to perform, and it just becomes a snowball and then we feel guilty because we haven't been with our own families enough. And there's no down time for self-renewal or spiritual reflection. It's pretty ironic, given our mission in life," she said.



The Rev. Chuck Cook, Goldsboro district superintendent, models healthy habits as a participant in Duke Divinity School's Clergy Health Initiative. (UMNS photo by Reed Galin)

Initial assistance from Duke connected McElray with a parish nurse who started her on a personal health program. The pastor has since worked off half her weight gain. Having help in focusing on lifestyle challenges that are typically built into the clergy lifestyle makes all the difference, according to McElray.

### Unhealthy trends

Practical issues were a factor in Duke's study into clergy health. Insurance premiums were rising for a group that has an unusually high incidence of medical problems such as heart disease. Pastors are also prone to putting off preventative care.

Swift believes this new health emphasis will affect younger pastors as well. She thinks it should be worked into the seminary experience so that pastors will enter their new

profession with an awareness of the need to minister to themselves—much like police academies routinely counsel students about dealing with stress.

Meanwhile, as McElray is on her way to the home of a church member confined to bed rest, she's talking about how her personal health is tied in with all the ways she wants to be there for her parishioners.

"If I'm gonna talk the talk and tell my parishioners they need to take care of their bodies, which are the temple of the Lord, then I need to take care of myself. How in the world can we tell our congregation what is truly important and brings true happiness if we're not practicing this ourselves?"

\* Reed Galin is a freelance producer in Nashville, Tenn.



LEFT: The Rev. Mary Lou McElray, pastor of Center United Methodist Church in Sanford, is taking part in the Clergy Health Initiative of Duke Divinity School. (A UMNS photo by Reed Galin)



## NCC-BMCR recaps year of activities and cooperation

By Jimmy F. Cummings \*

NCC-BMCR has had a full year of activities, involvements and cooperation across the conference.

Last October, a delegation of eight from the group attended the SEJ-BMCR meeting in Nashville. Last November, a large group from across the conference gathered at John Wesley UMC, Fayetteville, for a dialog session with Bishop Al Gwinn.

The first general meeting of 2008 was held at Wilson Temple UMC, Raleigh. Those gathered focused on a strategy to ensure that African Americans are represented on all boards and agencies of the Annual Conference.

Nine from the group attended the National BMCR Annual Meeting in Los Angeles in early 2008.

The May general meeting was held at Saint Peter UMC, Hamlet. A capacity crowd filled the sanctuary and participated in praise and worship, dramatizing, dancing, singing, and preaching.

New group leaders were recognized at the June meeting held during Annual Conference.

In late June, BMCR members gathered at Saint George UMC, Maxton, for prayer and to rejoice with the 34 youth and adults on their way to Rust College for Harambee.

At September's general meeting, held at Harry Hoiser UMC in Fayetteville, the youth shared their experiences at Harambee. More than 50 UMCOR Health Kits were gathered.

The Annual Bishop and Mrs. Joseph B. Bethea Banquet fundraiser, was held at Hay Street UMC in Fayetteville in October. Two college youth received scholarships, and officers were elected. The Reverend Leonard E. Fairley, Rockingham District Superintendent, was the speaker.

The final general meeting is set for Dec. 20 at Millers Chapel UMC, St. Pauls. This will be an Advent Season celebration, officers will be installed, and singers, dancers, and praisers will lead the group into a time of food and fellowship in the spirit of the season.

\* Jimmy F. Cummings is coordinator for NCC-BMCR.

## Camps honor retiring executive director, Wray Stephens

By Dail Ballard \*

This fall marks an important time of transition for the NCC United Methodist Camp & Retreat Ministries as they celebrate the retirement of Executive Director Wray Stephens and prepare the way for his successor.

Stephens, who announced his retirement in August, cited his belief that the ministry has reached a new stage in its development and would be better served by new leadership in the executive director role. He leaves the ministry poised for the future.

Stephens began his work as the ministry's first executive director in 1999. Under his leadership, NCUM Camp & Retreat Ministries has moved from uncertain financial footing to solid ground and completed a multi-year process of moving away from organizational dependence on the NC Conference to a fully independent, self-governed entity.

During his tenure as executive director, Stephens organized and strengthened the role of the board of directors that embraces ties with The United Methodist Church.

To that end, he established and maintained a healthy and vital relationship with the NC Conference and its local churches. Wray Stephens' work has been critical to the survival and success of the ministry.



Wray Stephens

Currently all three camp and retreat centers—Chestnut Ridge in Effland; Don Lee in Arapahoe; and Rockfish in Parkton—have thriving year round programs. Along with a flourishing summer camps, numerous retreat, school and after-school groups utilize the centers daily.

All three centers serve guests of all ages and provide programming that spans diverse interests including team building, coastal communities, challenge courses, environmental education, sustainable farming and small group dynamics.

A celebration of Stephens' legacy with camping ministry was held on Nov. 1 at Millbrook UMC. Former and current board members, conference leaders, friends and family attended the celebration.

The evening was a tribute to Stephens and his work, as well as an opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the history and impact of this life-changing camping ministry.


As part of the celebration, the board established an endowment for the Myra Morris Camper Scholarship Fund in honor of Wray Stephens.

It has always been Stephens' desire to make sure that every child who wants to go to camp has that opportunity. To that end, he has asked that contributions in honor of his retirement go directly to the Myra Morris Camper Scholarship Fund. Donations can be made to: NCUM Camp & Retreat Ministries, Inc., P.O. Box 726, Fuquay-Varina, NC 27526-0726.

A nationwide search is currently underway for Stephens' successor. The new executive director will be in place by the first of the year. For more information, please see the Executive Director Search tab at the ministry's Web site [www.ncum-camps.org](http://www.ncum-camps.org).


Anyone interested in receiving more information about the camper scholarship fund or ways to become involved with the camping ministry should contact Dail Ballard at 910-686-9442 or [dail@ncumcamps.org](mailto:dail@ncumcamps.org).

\* Dail Ballard is director of development for NCUM Camp & Retreat Ministries, Inc.



## United Methodists comment on Church Mutual service.

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# ZOE Ministry

## Giving Hope to Orphans in Africa

### A Life of Courage and Leadership

#### **Epiphanie Mujawimana, Founder of ZOE's Giving Hope Program**

By Greg Jenks \*

Frankly, I was stunned. Epiphanie is a brilliant, university educated, professional woman. It was difficult for me to imagine her being one of the poor, dirty, hungry children that ZOE seeks to rescue.

Later she told me her story. Her father died from a tragic accident when she was only nine years old. Her mother was sick and unable to work. The family was immediately plunged into poverty.

At age nine, Epiphanie realized that if she was going to be able to continue her education she would have to find a way to pay for it herself. She began to create small income-generating activities. She would go door to door trading matches for beans and then selling the beans. She began to plant small plots of vegetables so that she could use the money from the harvest for her school fees. In this way she was able to make it into and eventually graduate from high school.

Although she graduated first in her class, she was not allowed to attend school in the years before the

Christ calls his followers to support and care for the least of these. ZOE Ministry began in 2004 when the Rev. Greg Jenks responded to this call through the witness of a 15 year old girl from his church that traveled to Africa to work with children orphaned by the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

With the full support of the NC United Methodist Conference, Greg left the parish ministry to launch ZOE Ministry from his home in Clayton.

### See Hope

Help for African children orphaned by the HIV/AIDS pandemic and genocide through medical care, food relief, education, and clothing.

Ongoing love and support through ZOE Ministry programs and partnerships that bring orphans in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Kenya, and Rwanda back into their communities.

Prayer, emotional healing, and the good news of Christ's love extended through faith communities in Africa and the United States.

Empowerment for children living in desperate poverty through ZOE Ministry's Giving Hope Project providing mentoring, vocational training, income-generating activities to foster financial independence, training in animal husbandry and farming, and HIV/AIDS education and awareness.

### Give Hope

Today, thousands of people have helped meet the needs of orphans and vulnerable children in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Kenya, and Rwanda through the work of ZOE Ministry. ZOE Ministry is a project of the Advance for Christ coordinated by the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church. The Advance is an accountable, designated-giving arm of The United Methodist Church.

- ✦ Every 14 seconds a child is orphaned in Africa because of the HIV/AIDS pandemic
- ✦ Every day approximately 6,000 children lose a parent
- ✦ By 2010 there will likely be 40,000,000 orphans in Africa—25,000,000 due to HIV/AIDS

### Orphan Becomes Head of his Family at Age 12

#### **Jean Damascene, Participant in ZOE's Giving Hope Program**

Orphaned at age 12, Jean Damascene became the head of his family when his mother died in 2002.

With two younger siblings and an older sister who is severely mentally handicapped, he floundered in this role for two years.

During that time he was unable to successfully farm his land. Hungry and with a home that had fallen into serious disrepair, Jean, at the age of 14, left to live on the streets.

As is the case for street children, Jean survived by eating from rubbish. When he was able to find some work and make a little money, he used the money to purchase drugs or alcohol to numb the pain of his life.

In October 2007, Jean learned of the Giving Hope project being sponsored by ZOE Ministry.

Returning home he expressed his desire to reunite his family, repair his home, and utilize his land.

With training and a grant of seeds, Jean began to cultivate the family fields that had been fallow for several years. By the end of his first harvest he had already lifted himself out of poverty.

See "Epiphanie's Story," pg. 9

See "Jean's Story," pg. 9



# ZOE Ministry's Giving Hope Empowerment Program

Orphans and vulnerable children suffer from loneliness, stigmatization, and isolation. Giving Hope brings them together with other orphans and vulnerable children who understand their struggles and offer the support the children need.

## Working groups

Orphans in the program are assigned to a Working Group.

Each group generally consists of 15 families, including orphans living totally on their own, and some who are in charge of income and overall daily living with elderly grandmothers and/or siblings.

Children frequently say that this group is their new family.

Together, the children in the Working Group work to raise the standard of living for everyone in their Group.

The Working Group selects an

orphan to be the Leader. This child leads the group and assists in training all of the oldest children from each of the families in his or her working group.

Adult mentors support the Working Groups and receive the same Giving Hope benefits. They are recommended by the children, screened by ZOE, then assigned by ZOE to various groups.

## It begins with the community's involvement

As ZOE enters a new community, representatives meet with community leaders to discuss the needs of orphans and child-headed families in their particular location.

They invite community leaders to identify the most vulnerable orphans in the community who are then invited to a meeting to learn about

the Giving Hope program.

Everyone at the meeting draws a picture to represent their life dreams, as well as their hurts and fears. The pictures are placed on the wall in each home and serve as a catalyst for "Life Action Plans."

## Specialized training

Each month, Working Group Leaders and Mentors receive specialized training designed to impart necessary life-skills for self-sufficiency.

The orphans then decide on the action steps they will take to implement this training within their own lives and within their groups. They covenant together for help and support in all that they do.

## Weekly meetings

Every week, the oldest child from each family attends a Working Group meeting led by group leaders and mentors. They receive training and also participate in a project to collectively generate income or help one of the most vulnerable children from the working group.

The oldest child in each family shares the information and training from their Working Group meeting with siblings at home, putting into action everything they have learned.

Like a parent, the oldest child will teach younger siblings things such as health and hygiene and how to plant and care for crops.

## Giving Hope empowerment goals

Giving Hope works with children to help them understand things like child rights, household management, school reintegration, stigmatization and community reintegration, family mediation, and the following key areas of empowerment:

### Food Security

Giving Hope training, tools, and supplies such as seeds enable the children to help each other raise crops or income that will remove this vulnerability from their lives. Food Security is typically accomplished by the end of the first year and first harvest.

### Homes

Over 50 homes have been built for orphans in Rwanda since the project was launched in October 2007. The working groups often decide which families will receive the first home, based on greatest need, and working groups frequently participate in the construction.

### Income Generation

In their first year of Giving Hope, children are taught basic skills of busi-

ness management and the Working Group receives a small grant to begin individual family income-generating projects.

In the second year, ZOE provides a larger grant to the group in the form of an interest-free loan. The loan is repaid through the group account that was established in the first year, so that group members may continually borrow and repay.

### Business Collaboration

Working Groups are expected to begin income-generating activities to meet the needs of the entire group. A group bank account is established to which they all contribute.

In some cases, Working Groups form a co-op with other working groups to accomplish a more ambitious project.

### Health and Hygiene

Establishing simple hygiene and sanitation standards is an important aspect of empowerment. Without parents to teach them, many children don't understand the link between hygiene and health.

After training, many children see an improvement in their personal health immediately. When asked how Giving Hope had changed their lives, one group leader shared, "We are not sick like we used to be. We didn't know that we needed to boil our water before we drink it."

Sickness such as Malaria remains a killer in Africa, so it is essential for children to understand the importance of mosquito nets.

### HIV/AIDS Awareness

Giving Hope is working to break the cycle of HIV/AIDS through education. Many children do not understand the disease itself, knowing only that people around them are dying from what in some countries is called "The Poison."

ZOE works with community leaders to dispel the destructive myths and educate children about the facts of the disease, including biological information about human sexuality and the biblical understanding of sexual purity.

### Sharing the Love of Christ

In every Giving Hope meeting, the name of Jesus Christ is lifted up. This program offers more than essential life skills to the children in ZOE's care, it offers the love of Christ.

Working with local pastors, the children are connected to churches so that they can grow in their discipleship.

In ZOE's first year working in the Huye District in Rwanda, 563 children surrendered their lives to Jesus Christ.



With a successful coffee plantation co-op, these orphans have adopted other orphan children not in the program.

## The Generosity of the Poor

By Greg Jenks \*

*"...They gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability."*  
2 Corinthians 8:3

I am often inspired by many of the orphans to whom we minister. Frankly, some of these children have a dynamic faith in Jesus that expresses itself in ways that are hard for me to even relate to.

One such event occurred earlier this year in Rwanda. In the Huye District of Rwanda six working groups comprised of 87 child-headed families formed a co-op.

They requested and received about 5 1/2 acres of land from the government for a coffee plantation. They have been working together for several months to nurture the coffee seedlings they have planted.

A government official who has been assigned to work alongside of ZOE's efforts explained a bit about the coffee plantation to me.

He stated that when they harvest this crop in the spring of 2010 they will earn around \$10,000.

I immediately started doing the math in my mind and got tremendously excited. That meant that

beginning in 2010, each family will receive an additional \$115 per year. Although that doesn't sound like much, that is a huge influx of capital for these young people.

My mind began imagining the additional seed they could purchase, animals they could obtain, and expansion that would be possible in the income-generating activities in which ZOE has trained the orphans.

The orphans, however, had a different vision.

After this conversation, we were introduced to the orphans. The orphan who is the head of the co-op began by introducing us to other orphans in the community that they had identified and "adopted."

He stated, "We will share anything we have." Then he began to speak of the coffee plantation.

He said, "We've already decided what we are going to do with the proceeds. Fifty percent will be divided among the families in the co-op. But we are going to use the other fifty percent to assist orphans who are not receiving any support."

\* The Rev. Greg Jenks is executive director and founder of ZOE Ministries.





An orphan receives a hug from Epiphanie Mujawimana. The child was homeless prior to receiving a home from ZOE. ZOE has provided 50 homes for orphans in the last year.

## Epiphanie's story continued from page 7

genocide because she was a Tutsi in a country dominated by the majority Hutu. Discouraged, but not deterred, Epiphanie received the training that was available to her and became a teacher.

In 1994, Rwanda was devastated by the most efficient genocide carried out in the history of the world. In 100 days 800,000 people, mostly Tutsis, were slaughtered.

The weapon of choice was a machete. The tools used to harvest fields and bring life now were used to butcher neighbors, former friends, and even family members whose only crime was to have "Tutsi" on their identity card.

Epiphanie, her husband and two children were hunted by the killers. Eventually Epiphanie and her husband were separated. For two months they each thought the other was dead. Miraculously, they both survived. They were reunited only after the liberating army drove the killers from the country.

Following the genocide, Epiphanie felt called of God to help put her devastated country back together again. Working with different relief organizations, Epiphanie was particularly drawn to the orphans with whom she had so much in common. Concerned that she had so little to personally give them, she began to equip them with the essential life skills that they need to take care of themselves.

From this was born the "Giving Hope" empowerment project that has transformed the lives of thousands of orphans in Rwanda and Kenya.

Through the provision of seeds, animals, and small grants to start income-generating activities, ZOE empowers orphans to be able to feed themselves and meet their own basic needs.

Through training in health and

hygiene, the orphans are able to avoid many of the common illnesses. Through sharing the Gospel, they begin experiencing the life and hope that comes only through Jesus Christ.

Epiphanie continues to dedicate her life to caring for orphans. One of her favorite sayings is "it can be possible."

Recently the governor of the Southern Province sent ZOE a personal letter asking the ministry to expand throughout all 8 districts of his province.

This wide open door would require about \$10,000,000 over three years to change the lives of 14,000 child-headed households of orphans.

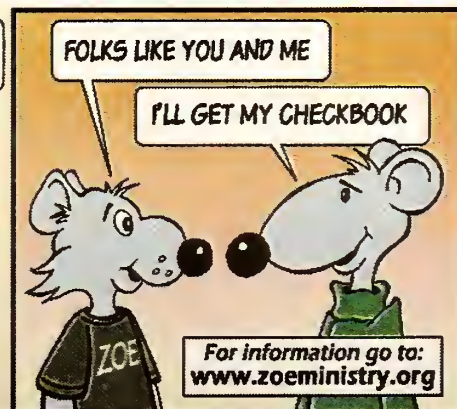
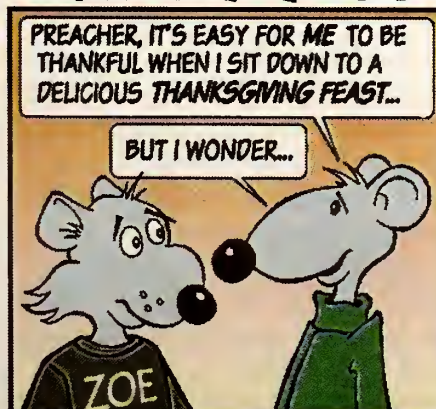
Please pray for ZOE that God will provide in this exciting time of opportunity. Through prayer, faith, and the leadership of Christ, "it can be possible."

*\* The Rev. Greg Jenks is executive director and founder of ZOE Ministries.*

### Learn More:

Visit [www.zoeministry.org](http://www.zoeministry.org) to read more about ZOE's programs and the children who are living HOPE.

## Church Mice



## Jean's story continued from page 7

With a surplus harvest, he had more than enough food for his family. Selling his surplus, he was able to roof his home and purchase new doors so his family has a secure place to live.

ZOE assisted Jean in the search for his disabled sister whom he hadn't seen or heard from in four years. Through radio and newspaper ads we located his sister and he brought her home to personally care for her.

Through ZOE's training, Jean was able to reach the standards required by the Rwandan government for people in poverty to apply for the grant of a cow.

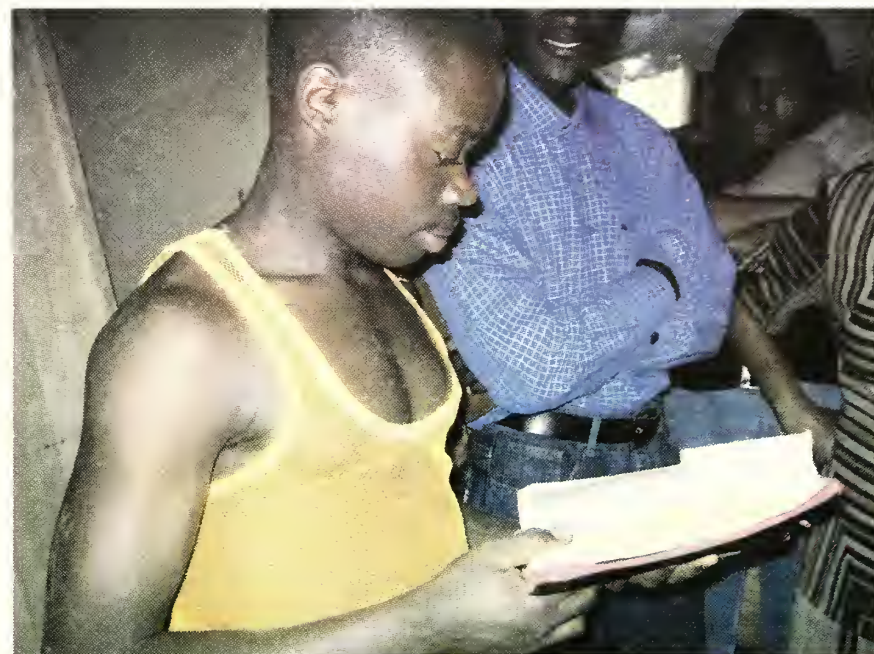
Thus, after only 6 months in our Giving Hope ministry, Jean had reunited his family, enjoyed a surplus harvest, repaired his home, acquired

a cow, and begun building a kitchen as an addition to his house.

Jean has accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. Jean was baptized in March and took great joy in sharing with a ZOE workteam how Christ has transformed his life and sharing his favorite scripture from Matthew.

Nearly 4,000 more orphans like Jean are receiving training through ZOE's Giving Hope Empowerment ministry.

Learning life skills such as food production, animal husbandry, HIV/AIDS awareness, health/hygiene, and income generating activities, these orphans are equipped to live lives of dignity, free from outside aid within 2-3 years.



ABOVE: Now a committed disciple of Christ, Jean reads to a recent ZOE workteam from Matthew 6:25. BELOW: Jean shows a ZOE workteam his house.



Karl Zorowski





A successful harvest - participants in the Giving Hope program receive hoes, seeds, and training on farming practices. The children help each other raise crops or income and typically achieve food security by the end of the first year.



Thousands of children are treated each year in ZOE's mobile medical clinics. In addition, this year a 40-foot container of medical supplies arrived in Zimbabwe to help refurbish two United Methodist hospitals



When girls are equipped to grow their own food they are less vulnerable to sexual abuse. When boys are equipped to grow their own food they are less likely to live on the streets.



Orphans are taught animal husbandry and farming skills through ZOE Ministry's Giving Hope Project. The project also includes mentoring, vocational training, income-generating activities to foster financial independence, and HIV/AIDS training and awareness.

## Alphonsine's story

Five years ago, as a 15 year old child, Alphonsine heard a noise in the bush and found an abandoned baby. Hungry, homeless and living in the bush with her sister and brother, Alphonsine refused to allow this baby to die. She took the baby as her own and named her Naomi.

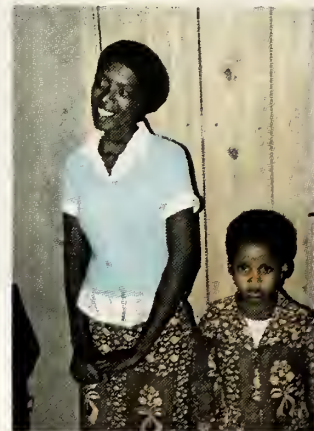
This year Alphonsine received a home provided by ZOE Ministry.

Physically unable to do manual labor because of injuries from a brutal attack during the Rwandan genocide, she will use the incomegenerating grant from ZOE to purchase seeds and to hire laborers to raise crops that she can sell.

The other orphans in Giving Hope have become her new family.

She said, "with the group I feel like I have a big family with lots of brothers and sisters." She quoted Proverbs 30:7-9 to a recent ZOE workteam which reads:

*"Two things I ask of you, O Lord; do not refuse me before I die; Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the Lord?' or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God."*



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## Breaking the Cycle: HIV/AIDS Prevention

People are dying. Every day AIDS claims 8,219 people in sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, 6,000 children are orphaned every day because of AIDS in Africa. That's one child orphaned every 14 seconds.

By the end of this decade AIDS will have claimed the lives of more than 60 million people and at least 25 million children will have become "AIDS orphans."

Through "Giving Hope" ZOE Ministry is working to break the cycle of death because of HIV/AIDS. This begins with education.

In educating the orphans, ZOE presents both the biological facts about human sexuality and the biblical understanding of sexual purity. Often with their new-found under-

standing, the orphans adopt policies of mutual accountability to encourage one another to abstain from sexual activity before marriage.

One of the unique aspects of ZOE's Giving Hope Ministry is that orphans are not just taught about HIV/AIDS prevention.

Through Giving Hope, they are also empowered to become leaders in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Through "Smart Grants" funding their projects, the orphans form anti-AIDS clubs using drama, music, and dance to educate their communities about HIV/AIDS.

They perform often at community gatherings. Children who were once isolated and stigmatized emerge as leaders in their communities.



1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 calendar

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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## Academy offers workshop on effective stewardship of time

Barbara Hemphill, author of *Taming the Paper Tiger*, will be the keynote speaker for an Academy for Excellence workshop to be held on Tuesday, Nov. 18, 9:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. at Edenton Street UMC in Raleigh. An emphasis of the workshop will be providing guidance that will help clergy, church staff, and laity to be effective stewards of their own time. The fee for the event, to cover the cost of a light breakfast and lunch, is \$20. More details will be announced later.

## National Farm Workers Ministry intern available to speak at churches

Alexandria Jones, a mission intern working with the National Farm Workers Ministry is available to speak with congregations regarding farm worker ministry and how churches can be engaged in ministry with workers who are often forgotten or are targets of crime and exploitation. Contact Alex at [ajones@nfwm.org](mailto:ajones@nfwm.org) or call (919) 489-4485.

## Serving the Poor – Understanding Poverty in NC

Erwin UMC (in Erwin) will host a free workshop on Friday, Nov. 7, from 9 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. The session is sponsored by Communities in Schools of North Carolina and Progress Energy. For more information, contact Susan Pennock at (910) 814-1746 or [pennock@ec.rr.com](mailto:pennock@ec.rr.com).

## Health and Wholeness event grants available for clergy of small-membership churches

Applications are now being accepted for the Summer Collegium, a Lilly Endowment project in support of small congregations. Twenty-five clergy and their spouses/partners from all Christian denominations will be invited to spend nine days at Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, VA, focusing on Body, Mind, and Soul: Celebrating, Strengthening and Sustaining Clergy Wholeness in Small Congregations. This event will be June 24-July 1, 2009, and applications must be post-marked by Dec. 15 to be considered. All expenses for the event, including travel, meals, lodging, books, pulpit supply and child care at home are paid for by the grant. For more information and an application packet, visit the Web site at [www.vts.edu/education/collegium](http://www.vts.edu/education/collegium) or call Marilyn Johns at 703-461-1760.

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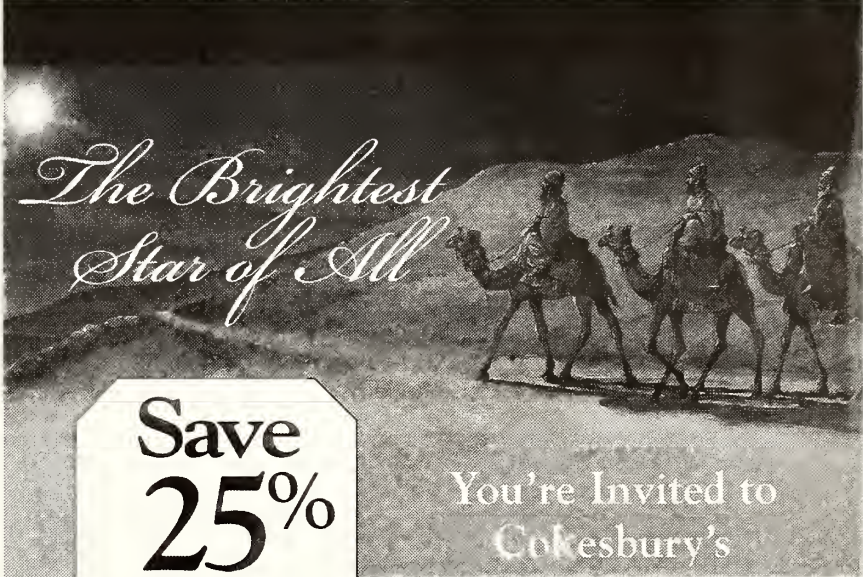
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## Kids for Hope shares the love of Jesus, director in NC this month

Khalil Abdmour, director of "Kids for Hope" will be available to speak to congregations in North Carolina, Nov. 6-24. This ministry shares the love of Jesus with the dwindling Christian community in Palestine, especially the children, by bringing them from their communities and towns throughout Palestine into tranquil and peaceful settings for several days of Christian fellowship, fun activities and worship. For information or scheduling, contact the Rev. Bill Haddock at [revbillh@nccumc.org](mailto:revbillh@nccumc.org) or (910) 762-2583.

## Center for Reconciliation's Teaching Communities Week

Jean Vanier, founder of L'Arche communities, and Duke Divinity School theologian Stanley Hauerwas will co-teach at the Center for Reconciliation's second annual Teaching Communities Week, Nov. 8-10, at Duke Divinity School. Events include a joint keynote lecture, a presentation for local churches, and a day-long workshop for students and community members. Vanier will also preach at Duke Chapel on Nov. 9. For more information, go to the Web site: <http://www.divinity.duke.edu/reconciliation/pages/programs/teachingcommunitiesweek08.html>.



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By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

## December 7, 2008

**Text: Luke 1:46-55**

### "Mary's Commitment"

When I was in seminary at Drew University, I participated in a service of evening prayer each week-day afternoon. Every time we gathered, using an order recommended by John Wesley, we sang the Magnificat, our text for this week's study (Luke 1:46-55).

At first, for this old southern boy, this practice seemed like vain repetition, but slowly my heart began to beat in rhythm with the heartbeat of Mary and this biblical hymn began to shape my own spiritual journey.

This anticipation of the coming Messiah is not exactly what we usually put on a list of "what I want in my messiah." What about scattering

the proud and bringing down the powerful (Luke 1:51-52)? What about sending the rich away while the hungry get fed (1:53)? Good heavens! This sounds like a radical re-ordering of life. My goodness! Gentle, sweet Mary is celebrating a drastically different social order. Have mercy! These words point to ministries of justice.

Why has God agreed to send such a Savior? In answer, I like the way the Synodale Version translates Luke 1:55b: "...de sa miséricorde à l'égard d'Abraham et de sa postérité, pour toujours." What strikes me about this rendering of the New Testament Greek text is the choice of the French word "*miséricorde*" for the word most often put into English as "merciful."

Unless I remember incorrectly what Pierre Aubrey tried to drill into my head, "*miséricorde*" combines two words: cord and misery.

God's mercy is the cord that ties God to those who suffer. That is the One God is sending as Savior! God made that promise to Abraham and

Abraham's descendants and God keeps God's promise.

If I work for justice and peace, if I seek to help those who are society's weak and outcast, if I insist on a fair distribution of the earth's resources, then I am singing again the song I sang years ago in seminary; and, more important, I am singing the song Mary sang of God's will for God's people: cords that connect God with those who suffer.

### What Someone Else Has Said:

Bede the Venerable, in the sixth century, wrote ("Exposition on the Gospel of Luke," *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament III*, InterVarsity Press):

"After (Mary's) general commemoration of the divine benevolence and justice, she did well to turn the words of her confession to the special divinely arranged plan of the unheard of incarnation, by which God deigned to redeem the world."

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God who has come in Jesus Christ to redeem a fallen world, to set free those who are bound, and to give new values to the broken places of our lives..."

## December 14, 2008

**Text: Luke 1:39-45**

### "Elizabeth's Commitment"

Most of us have several commitments going at one time. Trying to keep these matters in balance can take some doing. Maybe it is your day to drive the car pool and the evening for choir practice and it's a daughter's birthday and your promise to send out letters to neighbors about a food bank drive and tomorrow you are to go out of town on business. There is a lot going on.

In this week's study text, Elizabeth is trying to balance all the commitments she has: to her husband Zechariah (Luke 1:5), to her family heritage (1:5), to her unborn child (1:24-25), to her relative Mary (1:36, 42), to the movement of God in her life (1:41, 45), and to the child waiting in Mary's womb (1:43).

Elizabeth had waited a long time before she became pregnant (1:7). Don't you imagine that she was already dreaming up ways to spoil this child, this last minute gift from God? Having this baby would improve her

standing in a community that saw babies as a sign of God's favor (1:25).

No doubt Elizabeth was busy rearranging her home in order to give this baby priority. No doubt Elizabeth had dreams for this boy—they were told to name him "John" (Luke 1:13)—because they had been told that he would "turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God" (1:16).

So, here is Elizabeth trying to balance all of her commitments and now realizing that her son John is going to be her number one commitment.

Until. Until. Unexpectedly, Mary came to visit, and unexpectedly Elizabeth's priorities changed. The child in Mary's womb is the Lord! (1:43).

And Elizabeth, who had counted on her son being number one now willingly and joyfully releases that dream and gives her prime commitment to God's Son, Jesus (1:43-44). Elizabeth's son, John the Baptizer, becomes the one who points to our Lord (John 1:6-7).

I am left with the question: what commitment, what priority of mine, must be reduced in order for me to give full loyalty to Christ?

### What Someone Else Has Said:

T. W. Manson (*The Servant-Messiah*, Cambridge Press) wrote:

"(John the Baptizer) found himself irresistibly caught up by the mighty current of the divine activity in human affairs, appointed to tasks which he dared not refuse, furnished with a message which he must at all costs deliver."

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of new and surprising beginnings, open my heart to your newness..."

## December 21, 2008

**Text: Luke 2:8-20**

### "Shepherds Glorify God"

Don't you love these Christmas stories? The warm memories begin to kick in: wearing a bathrobe in a Sunday School drama; being old enough to get to stay up late to hear this text read at a midnight Christmas Eve service; looking over the traditional Christmas cards with bright stars and angels talking to the shep-

See "Bible study," page 14

## conference CALENDAR

### November

- 6 Taking a Closer Look: Transforming Congregations workshop 10a.m.- 4p.m., Daniels Memorial UMC, Goldsboro
- 7-9 Pilgrimage; Crown Coliseum in Fayetteville
- 7 UMW Church Women United World Community Day
- 8 Conference UMW DO-IT Day; Pine Valley UMC: Wilmington
- 13 Safe Sanctuaries Committee Meeting, 10 am; Methodist Building
- 13 Academy for Leadership Excellence Workshop; 10am-3:30pm; Edenton Street UMC; Raleigh
- 15 Shepherding 21st Century Sheep; Cyberministry & Cybersafety; Edenton UMC, Edenton, 9:15am-12:30pm
- 16 Unity Dialogue Holy Conferencing; Centenary UMC; Smithfield, 3-5pm
- 21-23 UMW Leadership Training

### December

- 1 AC program Planning Committee; 5:30 pm
- Conference Connectional Table; 10a.m. - 4p.m., UMB
- 3 Task Force on Institutional Relations; UMB, 10am
- 4 Children's Ministry Team Meeting, 1p.m.; UMB
- 6 Pilgrimage Planning Team, 10a.m.; UMB
- 6 Kaleidoscope Design Team, 1:30p.m.; UMB
- 11 Christian Educators Fellowship Lunch and Meeting
- 24-25 UM Building closed for Christmas Holiday

For more information on upcoming North Carolina Conference events, visit the conference web site at [www.nccumc.org](http://www.nccumc.org) and click on "Calendar" at the top of the page.



## Frazier to serve on Hymnal Revision Committee

R. Carl Frazier, Jr., Elizabeth City District superintendent, has been named to the Hymnal Revision Committee, authorized by the 2008 General Conference of The United Methodist Church.

A total of 27 voting members were named by the Council of Bishops, The Order of St. Luke, The Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts, the General Board of Discipleship, and The UM Publishing House.

The first meeting of the Hymnal Revision Committee will be held in January 2009.

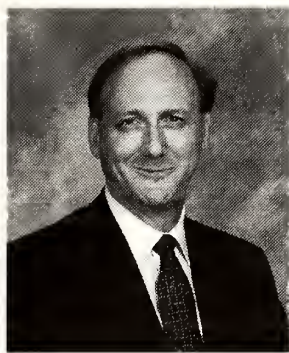
The committee is charged with preparing and presenting to the 2012 General Conference a hymn and worship resource for adoption as an official hymnal of The United Methodist Church for congregational use in the United States.

As the first comprehensive resource since publication of the initial UM Hymnal in 1989, the new resource will aspire to:

- Reflect changes that are occurring in music and liturgy throughout the connection and the larger Christian world
- Enable United Methodists to sing and worship in ways that honor God and transform persons and

congregations toward personal piety and social holiness

- Provide a common language of prayer and song
- Remember and celebrate the rich Wesleyan (Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren), sacramental, evangelical, and diverse theological traditions
- Incorporate expressions of worship in new and revitalized congregations to engage all persons, including new, younger, and diverse people
- Hold broad appeal across cultural, geographical, age, and congregational settings
- Incorporate ways to communicate music and liturgy
- Offer a clear expression of hope that The United Methodist Church is growing in its love of God and neighbor to transform the world
- Enable all who use it to express their own heart-language for God and to hear the heart-language of others.



The Rev. R. Carl Frazier, Jr.

## Ponder named honorary chair of UMM fund drive

Dr. Reginald Ponder, Sr., president emeritus of Louisburg College and former chief executive officer of UM Retirement Homes in North Carolina, has agreed to serve as honorary chairman of a \$5 million fund drive for the United Methodist Men Foundation.

The foundation raises funds for scouting ministries, the Upper Room Prayer Line, men's ministry and projects.

Robert Powell, executive manager of the foundation, is especially gratified to have Ponder assume the role of honorary chairman of the foundation's fund drive.

"When I became the president of the Alabama-West Florida Conference United Methodist Men, I became a member of the SEJ Council of United Methodist Men," said Powell.

"The meetings were held at Lake Junaluska Assembly. It was there I met Dr. Reginald Ponder who was the top executive of the Jurisdic-

tional Council on Ministries. He was totally involved in our SEJ meetings and was a tremendous supporter of United Methodist Men."

Powell notes that Ponder originated the concept of forming starter churches.

"We adopted this plan and built a number of these churches," said Powell. "Dr. Ponder has always had strong United Methodist Men units in the churches he served."

A graduate of North Carolina State University (BS), Duke Divinity School (M.Div.), and Candler School of Theology (D.Min.), Ponder received his first clergy appointment in 1958.

After serving a series of North Carolina churches, he was named a district superintendent.

Ponder is a four-time delegate to General Conference and a five-time delegate to jurisdictional conference. He has served as a director of the General Board of Global Ministries and the General Council on Ministries.



Dr. Reginald Ponder, Sr.

## James elected president of national association

Lynn James, executive director of the United Methodist Foundation serving the NC Conference, has been elected to a two-year term as president of the National Association of United Methodist Foundations (NAUMF).

"This recognition exemplifies the high esteem that Lynn's peers have for him and the wonderful work he has done at the United Methodist Foundation," said W. Daniel Pate, president of UMF's Board of Directors.

"UMF is excited about this opportunity for Lynn to take this leadership

role in NAUMF to learn and share ideas with other United Methodist Foundations that will, ultimately, enhance the services we all provide to Methodist churches nationwide."

Prior to accepting his current position at UMF in January 1999, James

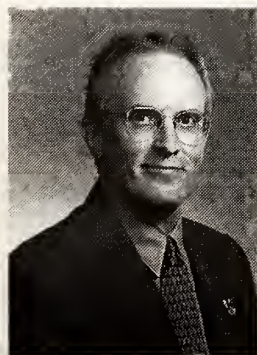
was director of development for the Lucy Daniels Center for Early Childhood in Cary, and vice president of development for the Methodist Home for Children in Raleigh.

James is an active member of the North Carolina and National Planned Giving Councils.

James is past president of the Southeastern Jurisdiction Association of United Methodist Foundations, and has served on NAUMF's Management Team for the past six years.

He is a member of Jenkins Memorial UMC in Raleigh.

He has served as an ex-officio board member for NC Conference Camp and Retreat Ministries, Inc. and is an active member of the Methodist Home for Children / Methodist Orphanage Alumni Association.



Lynn James

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# December adult Bible study *continued from page 12*

herds. It's the stuff of the season.

But the text is anything but calm and warm and fuzzy. Notice the tone and pace of these verses: "terrified" (Luke 2:9), "suddenly" (2:13); "went with haste" (2:16); "amazed" (2:18); "glorifying" (2:20). Perhaps we have worn the edges off this story of the birth of Jesus!

I cannot help but wonder if "the edges being off this story" reflects the fact that the edges are off our relationship with Jesus.

When is the last time I was amazed by our Lord? When was the last time that I was terrified by a messenger the Lord sent to me? When was the last time I felt I needed to act swiftly in order to fulfill what God was giving me to do?

Perhaps I have become all too comfortable, not only with the Christmas account, but even with the Lord Jesus himself.

Am I different because of my trip to the manger (Luke 2:20)? Am I willing to live as if the good news is for *all* people (2:11)? Am I willing to let God come to me in my daily life (2:8)? Am I willing to believe that God might have something new to say to me (2:19)?

There is a clue to the power of these verses in Luke 2:20. "The shepherds returned..." The word translated "returned" is *hepistreephun*; the

word can mean both "return" and "converted." That's not a bad way to leave the manger: returning to daily life and converted!

Maybe we are getting close to the heart of the Christmas story: changed lives that return and praise God. No wonder we like this story! And praise God when it becomes our story.

## What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Sanctity Without Starch* (Bristol Books), Robert G. Tuttle, Jr. tells this:

"Just before last Christmas I saw a cartoon featuring a small child saying, 'Let's see if I've got this straight. It is Jesus' birthday, but I get the presents, right?' In the next caption the child smiles, saying, 'Is this a great religion or what?' It is indeed a great religion, but most of us have a way to go before living up to it."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Happy birthday, Lord..."

**December 28, 2008**

**Text: Luke 3:1-20**

**"John the Baptist**

**Proclaims God's Message"**

Many congregations refer to the Sunday after Easter as "Low Sunday." Attendance is down considerably from the packed pews of Easter. The power and energy of the resurrection celebration fades into "business as usual."

What about this Sunday following Christmas? Now that the build-up to Christmas Day has turned into gray, winter weather, the edge can easily be gone. Now that the returns (Wrong size, Uncle Edgar, but it is a lovely sweater!) have gotten us into one more round at the malls, the holiday enthusiasm has begun to wane.

Of course, some folks are glad Christmas is over.

It is hard to go through the season of joy when one has recently lost a close loved one. It is hard to force a smiling "Merry Christmas" when it has become the loneliest time of the year. It is hard when the anticipation built up by marketing turns into disappointment.

Yes, some folks are glad to see Christmas gone for another year.

The truth is that it is hard to find

the joy of Christmas in this week's text. Note the words: "repentance" (Luke 3:3); "brood of vipers" (3:7); "wrath to come" (3:7); "cut down and thrown into the fire" (3:9); "What should we do?" (3:12); "false accusations" (3:14); "questioning" (3:15); "unquenchable fire" (3:17); "prison" (3:20). Oh, yes. Merry Christmas!

But this week's study text gives us the handle for picking up the Christmas gift.

Repentance (3:3, 8)—possible because of God's prevenient grace—is the way a visit to the Christmas manger becomes fresh and life-giving. Repentance is about turning around, going in another direction. If we are not changed by our encounter with the Christ, our journey to the stable has been in vain.

John the Baptist gives the invitation to follow the One who was born

in Bethlehem. And following means changing from sin and moving toward sanctification.

John gets rather specific (3:10-14) and makes it clear that the Christmas good news is accessible with repentance and that means justice, fairness, and new beginnings.

## What Someone Else Has Said:

Alysia Gray Painter (*More Mirth of a Nation*, ed., Michael J. Rosen, Perennial) teases us about "keeping Christmas:"

"Vow to keep Christmas all next year, or at least every other Thursday, preferably between seven and eight in the evening."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Come, Lord Jesus. Shine again the Bethlehem light upon us..."

# UMW *continued from page 1*

reach – Madoline Murphy; Spiritual Growth – JoAnn Stanford; Chairperson of Nominations – Dora Ann Maness; Communications Coordinator – Ceil Matthews; Secretary of Program Resources – Marjorie Brown; 39 & Under Representative – Stephanie Wright; Committee on Nominations – Doris Wade, LaNella Smith, Patty Stricklin, Susan Rayle, Claire Robinson, Kendall McDougald, and Jackie Wenberg.

JoAnn Stanford led the Remembrance Service. Districts recognized each deceased UMW member since the 2007 Annual Meeting.

The program concluded with a

Service of Worship. Darlene Jacobs, Southeastern Jurisdictional agent for Native American Ministries at Lake Junaluska presented the message entitled "Real Love." The love offering was \$1,543.

Rockingham District Superintendent Leonard Fairley wrote the Celebration of Holy Communion. Bishop Alfred Gwinn, Fairley, the Rev. Sandy Schaller and District Superintendent Sam Wynn led the Service of Word and Table, "Come to the Potter for Love."

\* Ann Davis is president of conference United Methodist Women.

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## BIRTHS

Claire Eloise Bryant was born to Katie (Durham: Resurrection UMC Youth Pastor) and Kris Bryant on Sept. 22.

Lydia Grace Smith was born to Kent (New Bern: Garber associate) and Jennifer Smith.

## MARRIAGE

Gloria Winston Holloway (chaplain, Louisburg College) and Les Harris, Jr. were married Aug. 23 at Louisburg UMC.

## • DEATH

The Rev. John H. (Jack) Crum (RA: retired) died Sept. 20. The funeral service was held Sept. 24, at Edenton Street UMC, Raleigh.



# around the CONFERENCE



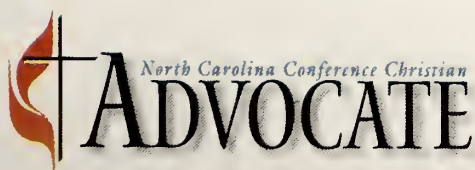
## Prayer Shawl Ministry - Trinity UMC

Trinity UMC in Wilmington has a Prayer Shawl Ministry team that has recently joined in making prayer shawls for families of men and women who have died in the line of duty while serving in the Armed Forces. The team is participating in a program called Prayer Shawls 4 Fallen Soldiers. Recently, the Trinity team honored Patty and Dan Desens of Jacksonville with a prayer shawl in memory of their 20 year-old son, Dan, who was killed June 24, 2004 in Iraq. Pictured (L-R) are Georgann Smallwood, Helen Dillavou, Dan Desens, Pat Desens, Julie Newton, Gail Younts, Pat Fascher, Jane Hughes and Ethel Adams. Churches interested in participating in the Prayer Shawl 4 Fallen Soldiers program are invited to contact Gail Younts at 910-791-9427.



## Summer Surfing Academy - Sharon UMC

Pictured are the participants of Sharon United Methodist Church's first Surfing Academy. The four-day event took place at Ocean Isle Beach and was open to children and youth ages 6 and older. The Rev. Eddie Hill (back row, fifth from the left) worked with local surfing instructor Marty Mentzer to organize the camp, which emphasized water safety, beach conservation, and surfing. Plans are for the camp to become an annual event and for Sharon UMC to start a Christian Surfers Association.



**Submitting  
Around the  
Conference  
Information**

Items for consideration can be emailed to [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org). The deadline is the 5th day of the month prior to publication. All articles and photos are subject to editing. Photographs or art should be recorded in the largest size and highest resolution possible. Send in JPG or TIFF formats. Please send articles and photos in separate files. Photos should not be embedded in articles or in photo viewing programs.



## Wilmington resident helps bring musical training to students in Côte d'Ivoire

A dream to train a new generation of United Methodist musicians in Côte d'Ivoire is a little closer to reality after a recent two-week training session in Abidjan, the West African nation's largest city.

A team of six Americans, which included Dr. Bettsy Curtis, director of Music Ministries at Wesley Memorial UMC in Wilmington, taught 37 Ivorians basic keyboard, choral conducting, music theory and worship leadership skills.

Other members of the team included leaders in the Global Praise program of the General Board of Global Ministries as well as seminary music educators.

They went at the invitation of Abraham Arpellet, national choral director for the United Methodist Church in Côte d'Ivoire.

The team quickly discovered that music is the heart and soul of worship in the Ivorian church. Several of the services they experienced, including those led by the students, included 15 or more songs from a variety of styles and in several languages.

"The students have been taught well by their churches. They've really internalized the drama of the liturgy, and now they want to make that drama real for their generation," said team member the Rev. John Thornburg from Dallas. "The student-led worship basically blew us away. The use of drums and the variety of dancing was really sacramental."

This training session was part of a larger strategy for connecting American and Ivorian musicians.

In June, a choir of 44 from churches all over Côte d'Ivoire traveled to the Houston area to perform at the Texas Annual Conference.

While in Abidjan, keyboard classes were taught with Dr. Eileen Guenther (Wesley Seminary Professor in Washington, D.C., and President of the American Guild of Organists). "In my 30 years of piano teaching, I've never had such a dedicated class of students," said Guenther.

"Their intensive work resulted in several rewarding performances at the end of just one week of piano study. One particularly meaningful moment was hearing the district superintendent's daughter play 'Standing in the Need of Prayer' for her congregation of about 400 people after only one week of piano study!" she added.

Bringing her experiences back to the U.S., Curtis has transcribed some of the choral music from Côte d'Ivoire, and the sanctuary choir at Wesley Memorial has started singing one of these French/African songs.

Recently, she presented workshops on "Incorporating Global Song into the Worship Setting" for clergy in the South Carolina Conference.

"The participants particularly enjoyed singing 'Agneau de Dieu' (O Lamb of God, I Come) which is a beautiful song I heard in the churches of Ivory Coast. I hope and pray that the world will come to know this body of music that is being sung by our Ivorian brothers and sisters in Christ. It is truly some of the most glorious choral music I have ever heard," said Dr. Curtis.



Originally Curtis' intention for traveling to Ivory Coast involved learning new authentic drum rhythms. She facilitates a monthly drum circle at Wesley Memorial for children and youth with special needs.



# 'Wandering generation' looks for connections

## From the United Methodist School of Congregational Development

*This is the final article of a three-part series covering topics explored at the 2008 UM School of Congregational Development.*

By Elliott Wright\*

The fact that many Americans have little idea what "church" means or what happens there was a recurrent theme at the 2008 United Methodist School of Congregational Development.

The point was underscored by sociological data and pastoral experience, but more attention was given to ways of responding creatively to the challenge than to decrying the concern.

Lack of knowledge of "church" is most acute among those under 35, prompting one pastor and author to focus her presentation on that population.

The Rev. Carol Howard Merritt is co-pastor of Western Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., and author of the 2007 book *Tribal Church: Ministering to the Missing Generation*.

She is herself a young adult and describes her generation as "wandering" when it comes to connections to God and systems of meaning.

"We have a huge opportunity with the wandering generation," she told 300 people gathered in Orlando at an annual event focused on church



The Rev. Carol Howard Merritt

development. She was linked by satellite to another 150 at a similar event in Grand Rapids, Mich.

"What young adults are looking for is right there in our congregations," said Merritt, whose church is located across the street from George Washington University in the Foggy Bottom section of Washington.

However, church-as-usual to those over 40 may not be recognized by young adults as a place of caring or a repository of answers to life's questions.

Contemporary young adults, according to Merritt, don't need the church in its present form, but they

do need a church interested in relationships and connections rather than programs.

At its best, she said, the "church is a place where they can form connections—with God, the world and each other."

Based on media presentations of religion, many young adults do not know that "Christianity is not the Republican Party, its leader is not Pat Robertson, and its message is not what you hear on Fox News," Merritt said.

"We need to think about 'church' a little differently," she said, picking up motifs from her book which uses "tribal church" as a metaphor for those who band together on a spiritual journey. The emphasis is on relationships.

### A different lens

Merritt invited her United Methodist colleagues to look at some of the realities of life for young adults today.

"Yes, we may be used to getting what we want, but there is a great shortage for young adults when it comes to medical care, housing, community and other basics that are needed to make connections," she said.

Young adults, she continued, face difficult challenges with regard to employment, finances and a sense of stability.

Many are deeply in debt, often from college loans, and find it necessary to live with parents.

Western Presbyterian Church is an inclusive congregation that is growing. It engages in a variety of community ministries, including a feeding program that it successfully defended in court against some of its neighbors in Foggy Bottom.

Merritt encouraged congregations new or old not to base their entire appeal or plans for growth on nuclear families or the pattern of getting children involved so they will bring their parents to church.

Those are good models, she said, but there is also a large population of unmarried young adults among the unchurched, and the church has a responsibility to that wandering generation.

\* Elliott Wright is the information officer of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries.

## Igniting Ministry advertising funds are available for Lent 2009

Funding is available to local churches, districts and conferences each year to assist with TV/cable, radio, cinema or billboard advertising.

Applications for Lent 2009 will be accepted Nov. 1-Dec. 1.

Collaboration with other churches is encouraged. Based on eight years of awarding grants and analyzing evaluations for each round, the advertising has resulted in a 15% increase in attendance when local churches coordinate their initiatives.

The first step is to call the Igniting Ministry office at 877-281-6535 and speak with Pam Buck or Jackie Vaughan for more information on the program.

Changes have been made recently to the program requirements.

Visit <http://www.ignitingministry.org/matching/overview.aspx> for application forms and information on program requirements.

Professionally created commercials and collateral advertising, resources are available at the Igniting Ministry Media Warehouse Web site: <http://www.mediawarehouse.org>.

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## 2009 Mission & Service Commitments



# Friends,

One of the great visuals the Bible gives us about the Church is that it is like a body. In fact, we are told that we are the Body of Christ. The purpose of the visual is to remind us that we belong to each other.

To be a disciple of Jesus is to be in relationship with Him as the Head of the Church and to be in relationship with other believers. Just as every member of the physical body is connected to every other member of the body, so believers are connected to one another. We do the work of Christ together. Serving alone in the work of Christ is never portrayed in the Holy Scriptures. We are to always serve Jesus in community with one another.

As United Methodists, we are connected to all other United Methodists. We always have been, since the first days of early Methodism. We Methodists even have special words we use when we are talking about our relationship with one another – the Connection!

This booklet is about some of our work as the Connection. It helps us see how we are “making disciples of all nations” (The Great Commandment) in ways as a Connection that we could never do in isolation from one another.

This is your report – it is my report – it is our report!

Notice that you and I, as a part of the Connection/the Body of Christ, are doing ministry on every continent upon this earth! The sun never sets upon our ministry for Him! The young, the old, the poor, the sick, the needy, the imprisoned, the ignorant, the hungry, the elderly, the diseased, the homeless and the

spiritually lost are all receiving our daily touch in the name of the Risen Lord! Praise be to our Lord for such a marvelous opportunity as this!

One of the great Kingdom rules that Jesus taught us during His ministry on this earth is that we must be willing to lose our lives for His sake if we are going to find our lives. This rule applies to congregations as well as to individual believers! When we pull back from connection into isolation, we are pulling back from the light into the darkness from which we were delivered! No single part of the physical body can live a healthy life in isolation from the other parts of the body, nor can Christ’s spiritual body!

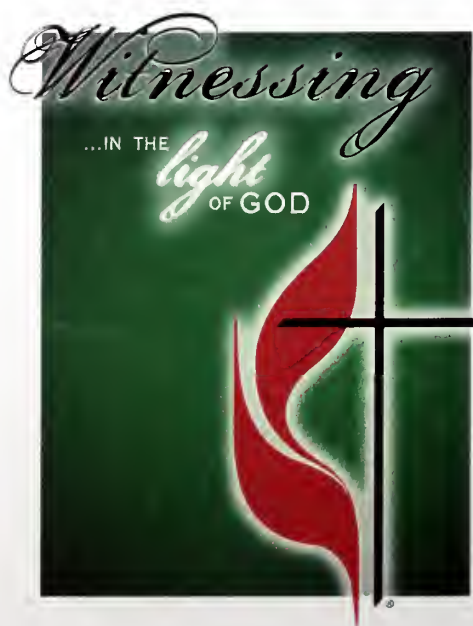
It cannot be overstated that living and participating in full community is essential to being a healthy disciple/congregation of Jesus Christ! I am thankful for all the spiritual blessings I am receiving because I am in full and healthy relationship with you as a

part of the Connection/the Body of Christ! And, most of all, I know this is pleasing to the Lord of the Church!

The Grace and Peace  
of our Lord  
Jesus Christ,

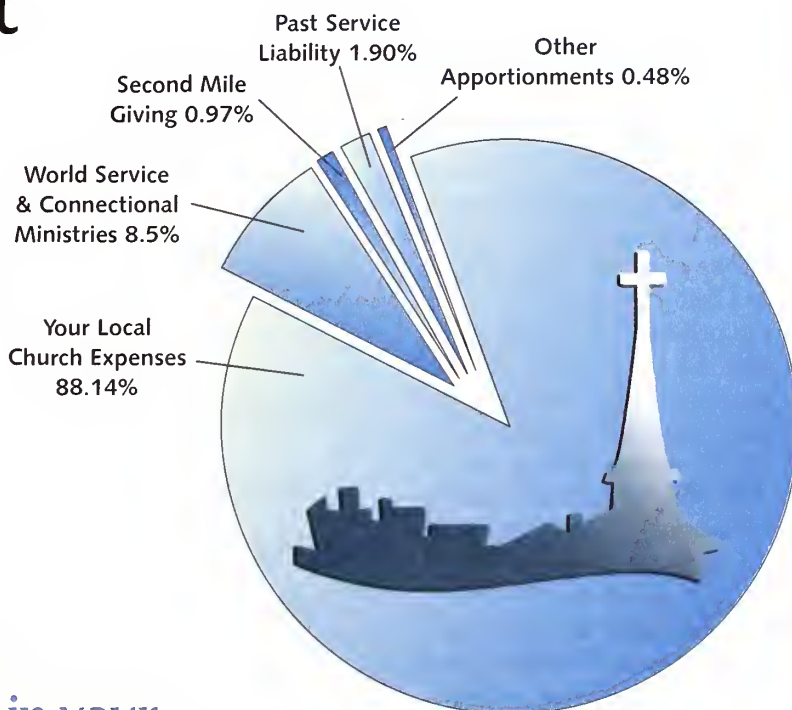


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- 25.50% Local Pastor(s) Salaries and Benefits:**  
This item reflects the compensation paid to the local church's pastor or pastors in the form of salary, travel, utilities, and continuing education allowances. It also represents the church's portion of pension payments on behalf of its pastor(s) and supplemental benefits for items such as hospitalization and life insurance.
- 23.17% Local Building and Debt Retirement:**  
This represents capital improvements, mortgages, and debt retirements related to local church buildings and property. Building programs and other capital investments unique to each church are not included in calculating conference apportionments.

\* Based on grand total of all expenditures as reported on the 2007 Table II.



## The Apportionment Formula

The apportionment formula is approved by each Annual Conference session and is based on how a church spends money.

The base amount of local church expenses is calculated by adding up all expenditures reported on Table II and then subtracting exclusions (as listed below).

Each church's base is then compared to the total of all base amounts for all other churches and the budget approved at the last Annual Conference is distributed to each church using the same ratio.

Unadjusted apportionments will not increase more than 15% from the previous year.

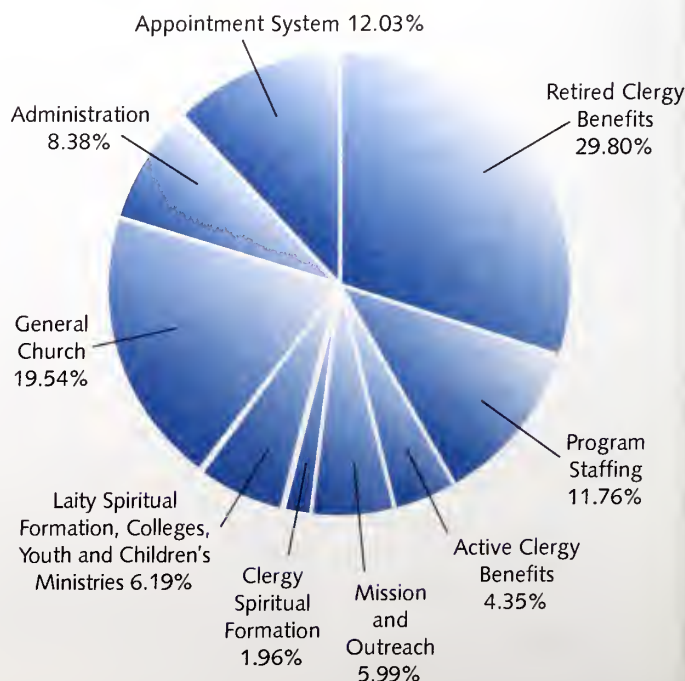
The exclusions are: Payments on World Service and Connectional Ministries, Past Service Liability-Pensions, Episcopal Fund and all other apportionments; district work fund; principal and interest on indebtedness; buildings and improvements; 50% of property insurance; local benevolences paid directly by the church; General and Conference Advance Specials; Ten Dollar Club; up to \$4,500 for travel paid by a charge for each pastor; United Methodist Student Day; Human Relations Day; Peace with Justice Sunday; Native American Awareness Sunday; One Great Hour of Sharing; World Communion Sunday; UMW Funds sent to district and conference treasurer; housing allowance paid in lieu of furnished parsonage to a minister serving under Episcopal appointment in a charge of the conference; offerings taken for disasters as designated by the Disaster Response Committee and the Resident Bishop.

## North Carolina Annual Conference 2009 Budget Distribution



## 2010 NC Conference Budget To Be Raised in 2009

In 2007, 817 churches in the NC Conference, with a total membership of 237,159, spent \$172,808,651 for all causes. This translates to \$728.66 per member. Based on these disbursements, the 2010 Budget (which is funded by 2009 apportionments) is as follows:





# NC Annual Conference Mission & Service Needs

To Be Raised in 2009 for 2010

**Totals by Conference**

	Approved Amount	% of Total Apportionments	Increase/ Decrease of Budget from Previous Year
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Total General Conference	\$ 3,781,774	18.78%	0.31%
Total Jurisdictional Conference	\$ 153,388	0.76%	2.51%
Total Pensions & Conference Claimants	\$ 6,000,000	29.80%	0.00%
Total Annual Conference	\$ 10,200,101	50.66%	4.29%
GRAND TOTAL ALL FUNDS	\$ 20,135,263	100.00%	2.21%

**Totals by Program  
or Ministry Area**

	Approved Amount	% of Total Apportionments	Increase/ Decrease of Budget from Previous Year
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** World Service and NC Conference Connectional Ministries			
World Service	\$ 1,964,827	9.76%	-3.16%
NCC Connectional Ministries	\$ 13,951,990	69.29%	3.59%
**Past Service Liability-Pensions	\$ 3,300,000	16.39%	0%
**Episcopal Fund	\$ 533,704	2.65%	0.59%
**Africa University Fund	\$ 60,675	0.30%	4.65%
**Black College Fund	\$ 271,105	1.35%	3.25%
**Interdenominational Cooperation Fund	\$ 52,962	0.26%	1.70%
GRAND TOTAL ALL FUNDS	\$ 20,135,263	100.00%	2.21%

Further details on the Program and Ministry areas  
are available on pages 6-11.

\*\* Within the NC Conference, budget funds are raised one year and spent the next. Items with asterisks are spent the same year raised.



# Mission & Service Commitments for 2010

## World Service & NCC Connectional Ministries

### World Service \*\*

The World Service Fund is the basic benevolence fund of the Church, designated in the *Book of Discipline* as "the first benevolent responsibility of the Church" (paragraph 812). Receipts are distributed to the general program agencies and other benevolent causes by a precise formula.

These agencies resource local churches and extended local church mission nationally and internationally. World Service allows United Methodists to participate in meaningful ways in God's mission throughout the world.

**Total: .....\$1,964,827**

### NC Conference Connectional Ministries

#### Outreach Ministry Team

Criminal Justice & Mercy Ministries ..... \$11,730  
Development and coordination of ministries in jails and prisons and advocacy for prison reform.

DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministries ..... \$30,000  
Carries DISCIPLE Bible Study into our state's prisons and smaller churches.

Disaster Response ..... \$10,000  
Works to provide organization, training, and oversight of United Methodist disaster response.

Methodist Home of Children ..... \$190,000  
Provides assistance for operating expenses and benevolent care.

Methodist Retirement Homes ..... \$200,000  
Provides assistance for operating expenses and benevolent care.

Golden Cross Fund ..... \$15,050  
Assists in payment of hospital bills, physicians, medicine and other medical expenses for laypersons with special needs.

Missions and Outreach ..... \$525,600  
Provides salary support for Church and Community workers. Funds mission projects, rural and urban ministries, assists minority churches, administers building loans and grants to local churches, and interprets missions programs.

Board of Institutions ..... \$500  
Reviews and supports the conference relationship with institutions to whom the conference is related "by faith": camps, Methodist Home for Children, Asbury Homes, Methodist Retirement Homes, UM Foundation, and the colleges.





Disability Concerns..... \$3,500  
Task force created to support the Commission on Disability Concerns.

College Chaplaincy Support ..... \$275,000  
Assists Louisburg College, Methodist University, N.C. Wesleyan College, Duke Divinity School, High Point University, Greensboro College and Bennett College.

College Chaplaincy Support -Reserve..... \$68,750  
Provides reserve for transitioning College Chaplaincy Support budget line to be raised in advance.

## Leadership Team

Multicultural Ministries Office ..... \$8,620  
Strengthening local churches in reaching out to racial ethnic people and building bridges among races.

Comprehensive Plan  
of Inclusiveness Grants..... \$50,000  
Provides grants for ministries of inclusiveness in districts and local churches.

Comprehensive Plan  
of Inclusiveness Programs..... \$91,950  
Provides program funds for conference ministries of inclusiveness.

Hispanic/Latino Ministries Office ..... \$16,300  
Program funds for this burgeoning ministry.

Monitoring and Accountability..... \$3,700  
Monitors for inclusiveness in regard to gender, ethnicity, age, and handicapping conditions.

Ministerial Education Fund..... \$679,565  
Assists in the education and training of clergy and diaconal ministers in our conference.

Board of Ordained/  
Diaconal Ministry ..... \$176,210  
Funds enlistment, preparation, examination, continuing education and career development for persons serving in ordained ministry and continues relationships with diaconal ministers.

Board of Ordained Ministry:  
Salary & Benefits..... \$52,000  
Sexual Ethics Program ..... \$21,875  
Funds one position to provide training or clergy and churches regarding sexual ethics.

Seminary Visitation ..... \$2,000  
Assists in maintaining contact with clergy candidates and in sharing opportunities available in the ordained ministry in our conference.

Bishop's Days Apart ..... \$8,000  
Bishop's program for renewal of clergy leadership.

Laity ..... \$24,700  
Promotes training for laypersons serving as leaders in the church and community; leadership training workshops, district and conference rallies, and programs.

Committee on Clergy  
Counseling & Consultation:  
Salary & Benefits..... \$134,645  
Supports salary & benefits for staff providing counseling and consultation for clergy.

Committee on Episcopacy ..... \$1,200  
Serves as support and advisory group on matters related to episcopal leadership.

District Superintendents Fund:  
Salaries and Benefits..... \$1,549,470  
Travel ..... \$104,000  
Cabinet Meeting-Related Expenses ..... \$37,621





Cabinet Discretionary Fund .....	\$5,000
Bishop's Discretionary Fund .....	\$2,000
Funds for use by bishop for emergencies or other needs not funded.	
Director of Ministerial Relations:	
Salaries and Benefits.....	\$308,050
Salaries and benefits for three persons in this office.	
Office.....	\$20,446
Office expenses, travel, telephone.	
Christian Unity .....	\$7,000
Interprets, advocates, and works for the unity of the Christian Church, encourages dialogue and cooperation.	
NC Council of Churches.....	\$18,000
Promotes Christian Unity, interfaith dialogue and cooperation, and advocates for social justice in our State Legislature.	
Effective Ministry Program .....	\$25,000
Provides assistance for pastors' salaries during medical or other urgent conditions and transition.	
Conference Staff Relations Committee.....	\$1,300
Supports meeting expenses of the personnel committee for the conference staff.	
Nominations.....	\$500
Supports meeting expenses of Nominations Committee.	

## Christian Formation Team

Evangelism .....	\$45,000
Promotes evangelism programs and ministries. Provides training and resources to local churches and districts.	
Church & Society.....	\$8,500
Relates the gospel of Jesus Christ to people	

and to the structures of the communities, nation and world in which they live, and develops programs which provide education and action on issues confronting the Church consistent with the Social Principles and the policies adopted by the General Conference.

Worship .....	\$4,000
Designs worship for Annual Conference events, and offers worship training for local congregations.	
Higher Education and Campus Ministry ....	\$5,000
Provides support for campus ministries, administers scholarships, connects colleges and the local church.	
Campus Ministry .....	\$488,964
Supports United Methodist ministry on campuses in the NC Conference through Wesley Foundations and Fellowships, and ecumenical campus ministries.	
Youth Ministry .....	\$60,300
Supports the conference youth ministry.	
Children's Ministries.....	\$19,450
Supports ministry with children.	
NCCUM Camp & Retreat Ministries, Inc. ....	\$275,000
At Camps Don Lee, Rockfish, and Chestnut Ridge.	
Education and Nurture .....	\$12,300
Strengthens and develops local church ministries of Christian nurture.	
Emerging Church Support.....	\$717,523
Provides salaries, housing, and benefits for pastors of new churches and administration of the Office of Congregational Development.	
Office of Congregational Development:	
Salaries and Benefits.....	\$210,203
Salaries/benefits for two persons in this office.	





Office Expenses .....	\$58,877
Office expenses and travel.	
Archives & History .....	\$7,650
Funds meeting expenses for commission, maintains records and history of conference.	
Conference Media Center .....	\$5,000
Provides ongoing support for operations in the conference Media Center.	

## Stewardship Team

Stewardship .....	\$12,400
Interprets stewardship theologically and promotes stewardship education and programs.	
Annual Conference Expense.....	\$160,000
Housing, food, and other expenses for the Annual Conference session of over 2,300 members (lay and clergy)	
Annual Conference Registrar	
Salary & Benefits.....	\$4,000
Conference Secretary's Office:	
Salaries and Benefits .....	\$88,000
Provides for full-time clerical assistance, a stipend for the conference secretary.	
Office.....	\$18,000
All office expenses.	
Conference Journal/Printing .....	\$40,000
Provides for the cost of producing the Conference Journal, directory, and Book of Recommendations.	
Office of the Bishop .....	\$30,881
Operations supplement to monies received from the Episcopal Fund.	
Office of the Bishop:	
Salary and Benefits .....	\$24,627
Salary and benefits supplement to help fund the Administrative Assistant to the Bishop.	

Communications .....	\$85,000
Resources for interpretive materials such as this publication, news releases and media relations, Igniting Ministry, production of Saddlebag at Annual Conference, Media Center mailings and support, and electronic equipment purchase and maintenance, web server and email communication, video streaming, and web site nccumc.org.	

## Publications: NC Conference

<i>Christian Advocate</i> .....	\$60,100
Provides a subscription for every North Carolina conference pastor and widow/er and additional support for the newspaper which is published by the NC Conference.	

**General Administration .....	\$218,936
The General Conference, World Methodist Council, Judicial Council, General Commission on Archives & History, and in part, the General Council on Finance and Administration, the Board of Pensions, and special litigation costs.	

**SEJ Mission & Ministry.....	\$153,388
Supports a cooperative ministry to United Methodists in the Southeast including SEJ Jurisdictional Conference, Lake Junaluska, and Jurisdictional Council expenses.	

## Conference Treasurer's Office:

Salaries and Benefits .....	\$650,343
Provides funding for a ministry and support staff of ten full or part-time staff persons, their salaries, health and life insurance, pension, Social Security, and other benefit costs.	
Office.....	\$227,525
Operating expenses of conference treasurer's office and statistician, including annual audit.	

Treasurer Bonding & Insurance .....	\$8,300
A conference-held bond covering designated financial officers in the local church.	





## Information Management

Salaries and Benefits ..... \$196,038  
Provides funding for a ministry and support staff of three full or part-time staff persons, their salaries, health and life insurance, pension, Social Security, and other benefit costs.

Office..... \$71,710  
Provides funding for the management and maintenance of the conference information technology infrastructure, including computer hardware, software, and network administration.

Conference Board of Trustees ..... \$1,600  
Funds meetings and work of this board.

Contingency Fund..... \$15,000  
Provides for unanticipated needs; administered by the Conference Council on Finance and Administration.

\*\*Methodist Building  
Operating Fund..... \$170,000

\*\*Methodist Building  
Capital Fund ..... \$200,000

Episcopal Residence ..... \$15,000  
Maintenance supplement to monies received from the Episcopal Fund.

Staff Housing..... \$53,500  
Provides housing for four clergy positions of the Annual Conference.

Legal Counsel ..... \$20,000  
Provides for conference legal expenses not funded by a particular board or agency.

Ministers' Transition Fund..... \$125,030  
Provides money at the time of retirement to clergy who participate on a voluntary basis.

## Committee on Equitable

Compensation ..... \$125,000  
Supplements salaries of eligible clergy to the base salary level determined by Annual Conference.

Minister's Moving Expense ..... \$185,000  
Assists in the moving expenses of pastors.

Joint Committee on Incapacity..... \$416,000  
Assists clergy who temporarily cannot serve due to incapacity.

## Conference Claimants -

Retiree Insurance ..... \$2,700,000  
Supports health insurance for our retired clergy and dependents of deceased clergy.

Incoming WATS Line ..... \$3,900  
Funding for toll-free WATS line calls to the United Methodist Building in Raleigh from within the state of North Carolina.

## General & Jurisdictional

Conferences ..... \$53,000  
Expenses for General and Jurisdictional Conferences and funding for electronic balloting costs.

## Conference Connectional Ministries:

Staff Salaries and Benefits..... \$1,105,913  
Represents a ministry and support staff of 12 persons, their salaries, hospitalization insurance, lay staff pensions, Social Security, travel, etc.

Office, Meetings, and Programs ..... \$116,750

**Total Connectional  
Ministries .....\$13,951,990**



**Total World Service & NC  
Conference Connectional  
Ministries....\$ 15,916,817**



## Past Service Liability\*\*

Past Service Liability-Pensions applies toward the unfunded (pre-1982) pension liability for pastors.

**Total ..... \$3,300,000**

## Episcopal Fund\*\*

Covers salaries and expenses of active United Methodist bishops and dependents, retired bishops and surviving spouses.

**Total ..... \$533,704**

## Africa University\*\*

The development of a United Methodist university in Zimbabwe. This university provides theological and other educational programs on the continent where United Methodism is experiencing its fastest growth.

**Total ..... \$60,675**

## Interdenominational Cooperation Fund\*\*

Supports those general church activities which are ecumenical in nature. This is United Methodism in mission with other Christian communities witnessing in the world.

**Total ..... \$52,962**

## Black College Fund\*\*

This fund supplements operational and capital needs of 10 black colleges, including Bennett College in Greensboro and one medical school, which have provided leadership to the church and nation.

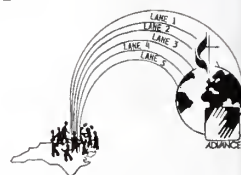
**Total ..... \$271,105**

**Grand Total  
all funds:  
\$20,135,263**





# 2009 Rainbow Covenant Advance Specials



After your church has gone the first mile by paying its apportionments in full (*World Service & Connectional Ministries, Episcopal Fund, Interdenominational Cooperation, Black Colleges, Africa University Fund and Past Service Liability*), then select at least one Advance Special from each lane. The six Special Sundays are not included. Send your contributions to each of these Advance Specials through the NCC Treasurer. In order for your congregation to receive the Rainbow Covenant certificate and recognition, please complete the Rain-

Lane 1: World Missions  
Lane 2: National Missions  
Lane 3: Missionary Salary Support  
Lane 4: UMCOR  
Lane 5: Conference Advances

bow Covenant Report Form located on page 20 of this booklet. This form is due to your District Missions Secretary by January 31, 2009. Rainbow Covenant recognition is normally a part of the District Lay Rallies.

## Lane One: World Missions

1. **PROJECT AGAPE, Armenia** ..... #S-00004  
Relief efforts in Armenia (food, medical supplies, medication); working with the Armenian Church to provide a holistic ministry in pastoral care, education, healthcare, agriculture and economic development.

2. **LIBERIA MINISTRIES:**  
**Ganta United Methodist Mission Station** ..... #14369T  
Funds received will support rebuilding mission station buildings and infrastructure destroyed in the war.

**Brighter Future Children's Rescue Center** ..... #S-00178  
Funds received will support Ex-Combatants, Vocational /Literacy Training and Feeding .

**Feed My Lambs** ..... #S-00179  
Funds received will support Street Children, and Feeding/Literacy training.

**Sustainable Agriculture and Development** ..... #S-00180  
Funds will support UMCOR – Mozart Adevu.

3. **PERU COVENANT TEAM:**  
Funds received for this project will be administered by the North Carolina Conference Peru Team to fulfill the covenant made between our Conference and the Methodist Church in Peru. Funds may be designated for the following:

**General Fund** ..... #S-00053  
**Breakfast of Love** ..... #S-00111  
**Matched Churches** ..... #S-00112

**Building Work Teams** ..... #S-00113  
**Medical Needs** ..... #S-00114  
**National Plan for Evangelism** ..... #S-00115  
**Christian Education-all ages** ..... #S-00116  
**Children and Youth** ..... #S-00117  
**Theological Education & Pastoral Formation—Obras de Wesley** ..... #S-00118  
**Women's Programs** ..... #S-00119  
**Leadership Development** ..... #S-00120  
**Mission Teams** ..... #S-00121  
**White Plains/North Lima** ..... #S-00173

4. **CURAMERICAS/ANDEAN RURAL HEALTH CARE PROGRAM, Bolivia**..... #10158A  
Provides vaccinations, nutritional monitoring of children, prenatal care, and other preventative health care services. Funds will be divided 42% for the Methodist Church of Bolivia and 58% for Curamericas/Andean Rural Health Care.

5. **AMITY FOUNDATION, TEACHERS, Nanjing, China**..... #09801A  
Teacher Support.

6. **AMITY PRINTING PRESS BIBLES, Nanjing, China**..... #11422A  
The Amity Printing Press (TAPP) was established in 1987 as a joint venture between The Amity





Foundation and United Bible Societies. Gifts help to print Bibles, hymnals and devotional materials in Chinese and minority languages.

7. **PROPHET ELIAS SCHOOL AND COLLEGE, LIBRARY**, Israel ..... #12832N  
For books, furniture and library expansion.
8. **BETHLEHEM BIBLE COLLEGE, VISION 20-20, BETHLEHEM**, Palestine.....#12017A  
For new facilities for Bethlehem Bible College, which prepares leaders and workers for Arab Christian Palestinian churches and institutions.
9. **HOPE SECONDARY SCHOOL, BEIT JALA, WEST BANK**, Palestine ..... #12018A  
For education, relief and compassion for disadvantaged youth.
10. **JERUSALEM INFANT WELFARE CENTER, OLD CITY, JERUSALEM**, Palestine.....#11544A  
For basic medical care for Palestinian children.
11. **PALESTINIAN CONFLICT-RESOLUTION CENTER, WIAM, BETHLEHEM**, Palestine ..... #14910A  
For community outreach, conflict resolution, education and youth activities designed to build a democratic, just society.
12. **SABEEL YOUTH PROGRAM**, Palestine.....#14909A  
For summer camps, trips, volunteer opportunities, workshops for Palestinian Christian youth.
13. **RUSSIA UNITED METHODIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY** (Not Capital Campaign) ..... #12174A  
Scholarships will provide good Biblical and theological training for the development of strong ministries for future Russian church leaders.

Any other WORLD ADVANCE SPECIAL as listed in PARTNERSHIP IN MISSIONS.

## Lane Two: National Missions

1. **ROBESON COUNTY CHURCH & COMMUNITY CENTER**, Lumberton, NC ..... #791742  
An ecumenical ministry in a multicultural community which is designed to help local churches

meet emergency needs, literacy tutoring for children and adults, home repairs and building new homes. Speakers are available upon request.

2. **NATIONAL HISPANIC MINISTRIES CHALLENGE FUND** ..... #982620  
Provides assistance to annual conferences developing Hispanic Ministries, especially in the areas of leadership recruitment and development, financial resources and printed resources.
3. **SOCIETY OF ST. ANDREW POTATO PROJECT**, Virginia ..... #801600  
Salvages millions of pounds of unmarketable potatoes and other produce and distributes the food to hungry people nationwide.
4. **HINTON RURAL LIFE CENTER**, Hayesville, NC..... #731472  
Provides for training needs and development of churches in town and rural settings.
5. **NATIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN FAMILY CAMP**, Oklahoma City, OK ..... #982602  
Provides an annual opportunity for Native American church leaders to attend or lead workshops in outreach ministries and evangelism.
6. **SEJ ASSOCIATION OF NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES**, Lake Junaluska, NC..... #791842  
To help meet the needs of 130,000+ Native Americans living in the 15 annual conferences of the Southeast.
7. **RED BIRD MISSIONARY CONFERENCE**, Beverly, Kentucky ..... #773978  
The conference program facilitates the development of local churches and local lay leaders in isolated rural mountain communities.
8. **ROCKINGHAM DISTRICT NATIVE AMERICAN COOPERATIVE MINISTRIES - "EVERY MEMBER IN MINISTRY"**, Pembroke, NC..... #791001  
Provides ministry support and collaboration among our 14 Native American United Methodist Churches, leadership development, gifts exploration and missional opportunities.

Any other NATIONAL ADVANCE SPECIAL as listed in PARTNERSHIP IN MISSIONS.





## Lane Three: Missionary Salary Support

The following persons have been recommended by the NC Conference Missions Development Team for Salary Support:

1. **MOZART ADEVU**, Eastern Africa .....#13996Z  
Mozart is a GBGM missionary serving as the Africa Regional Coordinator for the sustainable Agriculture and Development Program for UMCOR. Substantial focus in work in farmers training in Liberia.
2. **WIL BAILEY**, San Isidro, Costa Rica ...#S-00140  
(SEJ/Conference Missionary) Wil will be responsible for working with local pastors in the southern zone of Costa Rica and will organize the projects at the Methodist churches in that area for U.S. work teams. Also will teach Theology, Bible and English at the extension campus of the Methodist seminary in San Isidro.
3. **LYNN & SHARON FOGLEMAN**,  
Beverly, Kentucky .....#773720  
Dr. Lynn and Dr. Sharon Fogleman are Associates in Mission Service (AIMS) missionaries serving with the General Board of Global Ministries at the Red Bird Clinic.
4. **SHANA HARRISON**, Chile .....#13089Z  
Shana is assigned as a chaplain of Colegio Psicopedagogico Juan Wesley in Santiago, Chile encouraging persons with disabilities to explore, express and nurture their spirituality.
5. **GREG JENKS**, ZOE Ministries,  
Sub-Sahara, Africa .....#S-00148  
(Conference Missionary) Greg is serving in the Zimbabwe Conference, Rwanda, and other areas of sub-Sahara Africa to develop a comprehensive ministry in response to the AIDS pandemic. The primary focus is in the care of HIV orphans. The foci include establishing children's empowerment ministries, feeding programs, providing school fees and uniforms, and meeting spiritual needs of the children.



6. **SHIRLEY TOWNSEND JONES**  
Bennettsville-Cheraw, SC .....#982995  
(Church and Community Worker) Assigned to the Bennettsville-Cheraw Area Cooperative Ministry in the SC Conference. She coordinates and implements spiritual, educational, social and economical programs for the 13 member churches and communities.
7. **FRIDO KINKOLEGE**, Liberia .....#15152Z  
A Methodist originally from the Congo, Frido has been working with the people of Liberia since 2004. He has started several extraordinary programs that are powerful and constructive like the Brighter Future Children's Rescue Center and Feed My Lambs. These programs support ex-combatants and street children and feeding/literacy training.
8. **FAITH LAMPHIER**, India & Africa....#S-00187  
(SEJ/Conference Missionary) A Work of Heart - Sharing God's love through hands-on classes in sewing, cooking, and handcrafts. The skills learned provide an opportunity for the girls and women to gain self-confidence and, often, increase the family income.
9. **GARY WAYNE LOCKLEAR** .....#982955  
(Church & Community Worker) Assigned to the Rockingham District Native American Cooperative Ministry with the NC Annual Conference. Main goal is to grow the Native American churches and leadership in the coming years and to explore the possibility of developing congregations in all Native American communities in the NC Conference.
10. **DAVID MARKAY**, Milan, Italy.....#12192Z  
David is assigned to the Methodist Church of Milan in Italy with a missional emphasis of "Offering hospitality to the stranger/Being the church together." He offers ministries of preaching, teaching, pastoral care, sacramental ministry and administrative oversight.



11. **KRISTIN MARKAY**, Milan, Italy.....#12193Z  
Kristin is assigned to the Methodist Church of Milan in Italy with a missional emphasis of "Offering hospitality to the stranger/Being the church together." She offers ministries of preaching, teaching, pastoral care, sacramental ministry and administrative oversight.
12. **NARA MELKONYAN**, Armenia.....#S-00004  
Nara is the Director of Project AGAPE. She coordinates ministry and relief efforts at Project AGAPE in Armenia. (See Project AGAPE under World Mission Lane)
13. **VICKIE SIGMON**, Winston-Salem.....#982916  
Vickie works in a high risk community developing Christian community, promoting social justice and proclaiming God's loving presence.
14. **VICTOR TARYOR**, Liberia.....#3019571  
Victor is hospital administrator for Ganta Hospital, a position he has held since 2006. Also a registered nurse, Victor oversees the daily operation of the hospital while communicating with hospital staff to insure the hospital is providing the best possible care to each patient.
15. **HERBERT ZIGBUO**, Liberia.....#10911Z  
Herbert will be serving as Vocational Training Coordinator, seeking to improve and develop vocational training programs in selected United Methodist Schools.
16. **MARY ZIGBUO**, Liberia.....#10721Z  
Mary will assist the church in developing a program catering to the physical, educational, and spiritual needs of disabled populations.

term developmental assistance to eliminate the root causes of hunger.

4. **BREAD FOR THE WORLD**.....#982325  
Educates and influences people to work for government policies that address the basic causes of domestic and world hunger.
5. **HEIFER PROJECT INTERNATIONAL**  
General Program.....#982530  
Living-Gift Program.....#982532  
An inter-faith project providing animals and assistance to rural families. Recipients agree to pass on the first born female offspring of their animals to someone else in need.
6. **CROP/CHURCH WORLD SERVICE COMMUNITY HUNGER APPEAL**.....#982380  
Funds raised by a local church in a CROP event can receive UMCOR credit. For forms contact: Carolinas CROP Office, 1006 Lamond Ave., Durham, NC 27701.
7. **URBAN AGRICULTURE IN GAZA STRIP**, Israel.....#629001  
For urban-agriculture initiatives for refugees to improve health and income.
8. **EMPOWERMENT & SOLIDARITY WITH MIDDLE EAST REFUGEES & DISPLACED**.....#601732  
To help with improved living conditions of refugees in the Middle East.
9. **GLOBAL REFUGEE RESPONSE**.....#982540  
An opportunity for United Methodists to assist refugees worldwide.

## Lane Four: UMCOR

1. **UMCOR DOMESTIC DISASTER RESPONSE**.....#901670  
Enables UMCOR to respond to persons in need after natural disasters in the US.
2. **REFUGEE PROGRAMS**,  
Asia/Pacific Region.....#201700  
Organizes emergency assistance, income-generating projects, and food and medicine aid for refugees.
3. **WORLD HUNGER/POVERTY**.....#982920  
Provides both short-term crisis relief and long-

Any other UMCOR ADVANCE SPECIAL listed in PARTNERSHIP IN MISSIONS or any UMCOR emergency appeal.



Photo: Paul Jeffrey/UMCOR



## Lane Five: Conference Advances

*\* Denotes a "fit" in more than one category*

### CHILDREN/SCHOOLS

1. **ALL GOD'S CHILDREN UMC \*** .....#S-08004  
This ministry develops programs to meet the needs of impoverished children & youth in rural Bertie, Hertford and Northampton Counties.
2. **MISSION TO HAITI** .....#S-00122  
Many communities in Haiti do not have schools. This project is to assist in building schools and supplement teacher's salaries when possible.
3. **PRISON MATCH \***  
(Mothers And Their CHildren).....#S-00054  
An interfaith program provides mothers and their children with the support and resources necessary to maintain and strengthen family relationships and to help break the cycle of children following their parents to prison.
4. **VOLUNTEER FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN** .....#S-00071  
A private non-profit organization with the purpose of helping communities develop and utilize local resources by providing emergency shelter care to children-in-crisis.
5. **YOUTH SERVICE FUND (YSF)**.....#S-00082  
Supports mission projects within the annual conference and beyond, which have been selected by youth of our conference.
6. **THE PEACE \*** .....#S-00183  
This ministry develops programs focusing on children and parenting/teaching issues within schools and churches in workshop, seminar, conference and/or retreat settings. For Christians, parenting can be viewed as an important spiritual discipline contributing to the healthy

spiritual formation and character development of children, youth and parents/teachers.

### CHURCH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

7. **ALL GOD'S CHILDREN UMC \*** .....#S-08004  
This ministry develops programs to meet the needs of impoverished children & youth in rural Bertie, Hertford and Northampton Counties.
8. **MERCI MISSION CENTER \*** .....#S-00136  
This center provides mission and ministry programs to meet people's physical and spiritual needs. The primary functions of MERCI are disaster preparedness, response, & outreach ministry.
9. **JOHN WESLEY ENDOWMENT** .....#JWEND  
The John Wesley Endowment is to provide start-up, promotional, and sustaining funds for new churches established in low income communities in the NC Carolina Conference.
10. **SHALOM ZONES IN THE NC CONFERENCE** .....#S-00105  
Churches and communities working together to rebuild community life.
11. **CASWELL COUNTY PARISH, INC**...#S-00008  
Provides services to elderly and low-income families through Meals-on-Wheels, outreach program, fuel/rent assistance, clothing, food, & Family Violence Prevention Program.
12. **DISCIPLE BIBLE OUTREACH \*** .....#S-00103  
A COLLABORATIVE MINISTRY of the North Carolina and Western North Carolina Conferences developing Disciple Bible Studies, especially in small membership churches and in mission settings, particularly in prisons.
13. **A TIME TO GROW \*** .....#S-00154  
To create a leadership academy for new church leaders and transitional church leaders for the conference and to provide support for new church development.





## 14. **HUNTING QUARTERS SENIOR CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP** .....#S-00171

This program seeks to address the needs of senior citizens located in the down east area of Carteret County. It provides them the opportunity to escape the isolation of their homes, obtain information pertinent to the senior citizen's community, offers well balanced and nutritional meals, as well as entertainment.

## 15. **THE PEACE \*** .....#S-00183

This ministry develops programs focusing on children and parenting/teaching issues within schools and churches in workshop, seminar, conference and/or retreat settings. For Christians, parenting can be viewed as an important spiritual discipline contributing to the healthy spiritual formation and character development of children, youth and parents/teachers.

## **DISASTER RECOVERY/ VOLUNTEER WORK TEAMS**

## 16. **MERCI MISSION CENTER \*** .....#S-00136

This center provides mission and ministry programs to meet people's physical and spiritual needs. The primary functions of MERCI are disaster preparedness, response, & outreach ministry.

## 17. **NC INTERFAITH** .....#S-00108

Interfaith supports disaster recovery efforts by all faith groups in North Carolina.

## 18. **NC CONFERENCE DISASTER APPEALS** .....#S-00096

## 19. **UNITED METHODIST VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION WORK TEAMS** .....#S-00021

Provides assistance for Volunteers in Mission work teams from within the North Carolina Conference.

## 20. **ISA GRANT SCHOLARSHIP** .....#S-00033

Provides work team scholarships for persons

who could not otherwise participate, especially young adults.

## **ETHNIC POPULATIONS**

## 21. **ROCKINGHAM DISTRICT NATIVE AMERICAN COOPERATIVE MINISTRIES - "EVERY MEMBER IN MINISTRY" ....**#S-00143

Provides ministry support, collaboration among our fourteen (14) Native American United Methodist Churches, leadership development, gifts exploration and missional opportunities.

## 22. **HISPANIC MINISTRIES** .....#S-00107

Ministry to the fast growing Hispanic population in North Carolina. These funds will be administered by the North Carolina Conference Hispanic Ministry Team to support an increasing number of our congregations who are developing ministry to Hispanics.

## 23. **SANFORD DISTRICT EMBRACE (HISPANIC/LATINO) INITIATIVE ...**#S-00032

A ministry to fast growing Hispanic population in Siler City and Sanford, served by Spanish-speaking pastor. Worship, Bible study, fellowship, and assistance with cultural transition needs are provided.

## 24. **ETHNIC LOCAL CHURCH PROJECTS IN THE ROCKINGHAM DISTRICT** .....#S-00022

Funds will be used to assist ethnic churches with crucial needs.

## 25. **WESLEY HERITAGE PROJECT** .....#S-00097

Gifts will help distribute Obras de Wesley, the works of John and Charles Wesley in Spanish.

## 26. **NEW BERN DISTRICT EMBRACE (HISPANIC/ LATINO) MINISTRIES** .....#S-00172

To develop a fund which will be able to supplement income to Lay Missioners and Pastors of Hispanic Latino ministries throughout the New Bern District.





27. **THE PEACE \*** .....#S-00183  
The ministry develops programs focusing on diversity and accepting differences among children, youth, adults, families, communities and cultures in worship, seminar, conference and/or retreat settings. For Christians, openness to diversity and human differences can be viewed as important spiritual disciplines contributing to the healthy spiritual formation and character development of children, youth, and adults.

## HUNGER, HUMANITARIAN RELIEF, MEDICAL CARE

28. **NO HUNGRY NEIGHBORS (NHN)** ....#S-00123  
A ministry of raising awareness, and eliminating hunger here in our own state. NHN supports the various food banks in our Conference and Society of St. Andrew.
29. **CONGREGATIONAL FOOD PANTRY SUPPORT** .....#S-00155  
Provides grant support for the creation and operation of local church food pantries.
30. **STOP HUNGER NOW** .....#S-00101  
Provides immediate relief to famine affected areas around the world.
31. **NC OFFICE, SOCIETY OF ST. ANDREW POTATO PROJECT**, Durham.....#S-00081  
Coordinates and runs all hunger programs for Society of St. Andrew in NC. Millions of pounds of produce saved and distributed in North Carolina at a cost of just 3 cents per pound.
32. **FOOD BANK OF CENTRAL & EASTERN NC**.....#S-00025  
Distributes food at minimal cost to hunger ministries in North Carolina.
33. **ALLIANCE MEDICAL MINISTRY** .....#S-00142  
This ministry was founded to provide affordable primary medical care to low-income, uninsured, working families in Wake County. This ministry

aims to serve the working poor, families generally earning less than \$25,000 annually, who have no health insurance.

34. **GOLDEN CROSS** .....#S-00153  
Ministry that reaches out in love to the laity in our Conference who are experiencing financial difficulty due to excessive medical expenses.
35. **CLERGY COUNSELING AND CONSULTATION** .....#S-00182  
Clergy Counseling Consultation Services – providing ministerial counseling support for clergy and families. Services offered are individual assessment, counseling, consultation, and referrals. Non-restricted program and office support.

## INSTITUTIONAL PROGRAMS

36. **NC COUNCIL OF CHURCHES** .....#S-00051  
Gives witness to the unity that God has given through Christ, to the churches in NC. It is an instrument for cooperative study and action, especially on matters of justice; child and family advocacy; violence against women; public policy advocacy; rural crisis and farm workers advocacy; disaster relief; criminal justice; workplace safety; peace-making; AIDS ministry; and Christian unity.
37. **DISTRICT BOARDS OF MISSION:**  
Funds should be sent directly to the District Boards and reported at year-end on Table II as a Conference Advance.
- |                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| Burlington     | .....#S-00201 |
| Durham         | .....#S-00202 |
| Elizabeth City | .....#S-00203 |
| Fayetteville   | .....#S-00204 |
| Goldsboro      | .....#S-00205 |
| Greenville     | .....#S-00206 |
| New Bern       | .....#S-00207 |
| Raleigh        | .....#S-00208 |
| Rockingham     | .....#S-00209 |
| Rocky Mount    | .....#S-00210 |
| Sanford        | .....#S-00211 |
| Wilmington     | .....#S-00212 |





38. **CONFERENCE EVANGELISTS** .....#S-00079  
To provide support for NC Conference approved evangelists.
39. **ALL NEW CHURCHES LESS THAN FIVE YEARS OLD** .....#S-08000
40. **THE FOLLOWING UNITED METHODIST INSTITUTIONAL PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS:**
- a. **United Methodist Camps:**
    - Chestnut Ridge .....#S-00062
    - Don Lee .....#S-00063
    - Kerr Lake.....#S-00064
    - Rockfish.....#S-00065
  - b. **Wesley Foundation for The UMC Campus Ministry Association**
    - Duke University.....#S-00073
    - ECU, Greenville .....#S-00074
    - NC State University .....#S-00075
    - UNC-Pembroke .....#S-00076
    - UNC-Chapel Hill .....#S-00077
  - c. **General Scholarship Funds:**
    - Duke Divinity School.....#S-00026
    - Louisburg College .....#S-00027
    - Methodist University .....#S-00028
    - NC Wesleyan College .....#S-00029
  - d. **Benevolent Funds of the Methodist Retirement Homes** .....#S-03600
  - e. **Benevolent Funds of the Methodist Home for Children**.....#S-03500
  - f. **Asbury Homes** .....#S-03501

41. **A TIME TO GROW \*** .....#S-00154  
To create a leadership academy for new church leaders and transitional church leaders for the conference and to provide support for new church development.

## PRISON MINISTRIES

42. **PRISON MATCH \***  
(Mothers And Their CHildren) .....#S-00054  
An interfaith program provides mothers and their children with the support and resources necessary to maintain and strengthen family relationships and to help break the cycle of children following their parents to prison.
43. **YOKEFELLOW PRISON MINISTRIES**.....#S-00078  
Educates church people concerning Christian responsibility for persons affected by crime and brings Christians into direct service ministries with prison inmates and their families.
44. **DISCIPLE BIBLE OUTREACH \*** .....#S-00103  
A COLLABORATIVE MINISTRY of the North Carolina and Western North Carolina Conferences developing Disciple Bible Studies, especially in small membership churches and in missional settings, particularly in prisons.

## DISTRICT PROJECTS

The Annual Conference will approve district projects for advance specials in accordance with *The Book of Discipline*. This ensures that local churches making advance specials on a district level and recorded on monthly remittance reports to the Treasurer's Office will receive credit.





# 2008 Rainbow Covenant Report Form

Complete all information for your congregation and return to your *District Missions Secretary*. Completing this form ensures that your church will be recognized for its work in missions in the past year.

1. Did your church complete the first mile of United Methodist Missions by paying 100% of its 2008 apportionments (*World Service & Connectional Ministries, Episcopal Fund, Interdenominational Cooperation, Black Colleges, Africa University Fund and Past Service Liability*)? ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Did your church go the second mile by giving to the Advance for missions? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, list the projects supported and the amounts given to each: (use additional paper if necessary):

**Remember:** To be recognized as a Rainbow Covenant church, churches must pay 100% of all 2008 apportionments and give a contribution in each of the five lanes. The six Special Sunday offerings are not included.

## District Mission Secretaries

### Burlington – Rev. Terry Huffines

First UMC, PO Box 923, Elon, NC 27244-0923  
(336) 584-5263 (o) Email: thuffines@nccumc.org

### Durham – Jay Davis

507 Bill Poole Road, Rougemont, NC 27572  
(919) 479-9595 (h) Email: labor4evr@aol.com

### Elizabeth City – Rev. Greg Barrick

PO Box 62, Gatesville, NC 27938  
(252) 357-0611 (o) Email: gbarrick@nccumc.org

### Fayetteville – Rev. Mike Hale

The PEACE, 4948 Lattimore St., Hope Mills, NC 28348  
(910) 987-3753 (o) Email: mhale@nccumc.org

### Goldsboro – Rev. Ron Rivenbark

PO Box 307, Magnolia, NC 28453  
(910) 289-9425 (o) Email: rrivenbark@nccumc.org

### Greenville – Rev. Bobby Fletcher

106 E. Church Street, Williamston, NC 27892  
(252) 792-3360 (o) Email: bfletch@nccumc.org

### New Bern – Rev. Connie Stutts

637 Farm Life Avenue, Vanceboro, NC 28586  
(252) 638-2248 (o) Email: cstutts@nccumc.org

### Raleigh – Rev. Jo Elaine Harris

St. Mark's UMC, 4801 Six Forks Road, Raleigh, NC 27609  
(919) 787-0544, Ext. 19 (o) Email: joelaine@nccumc.org

### Rockingham – Lawrence Dye

PO Box 122, Hamlet, NC 28345 (910) 582-2365 (h)

### Rocky Mount – Rev. Kris Williams

PO Box 13, Pinetops, NC 27864  
(252) 827-4176 (o) kwilliams@nccumc.org

### Sanford – Rev. Patricia Sykes

522 Glendale Street, Siler City, NC 27344  
(919) 742-3707 (h) Email: pssykes@nccumc.org

### Wilmington – Rev. William Haddock, Jr.

Wrightsboro UMC, 3300 N. Kerr Ave., Wilmington, NC 28405 (910) 762-2583 (o) Email: revbillh@nccumc.org

Church

District

Church Mailing Address

Chairperson of Missions/Outreach

## Lane 1: World

## Lane 2: National

## Lane 3: Missionary Salary Support

## Lane 4: UMCOR

## Lane 5: Conference Advance

Grand total of all gifts given to the Advance \_\_\_\_\_

Your church membership at the end of 2008 \_\_\_\_\_

Per-member giving to the Advance for 2008  
(divide grand total by membership) \_\_\_\_\_

Name & phone # of person completing this form: \_\_\_\_\_

Return this form to your District Missions Secretary by **January 31, 2009**. NOTE: Send contributions to the NCC Treasurer's Office. Check with them for the *due dates for Advances and Apportionments*.



# Conference Media Resource Center

Open to all local churches in the North Carolina Conference, The Walton Memorial, NC Conference Media Center is located in the United Methodist Building in Raleigh. It has over 2,500 video and printed resources available for checkout. You may come to the Center and browse through the available resources or from the convenience of your office or home, look through the Online Catalog.

Ordering resources can be completed by phone or email. If you have questions or need suggestions, contact Laura Bailey, Director. Resources include materials for teacher training, mission awareness, age level studies, expert-lead Bible classes, stewardship programs, curriculum examples. These and other items are available to preview and for use in ministries of the local church.

**NCC Media Center Director: Laura Bailey**  
**919-832-9560 or 1-800-849-4433, extension 264**  
**Email: [llbailey@nccumc.org](mailto:llbailey@nccumc.org)**  
**Web site: [www.nccumc.org/media-center/index.htm](http://www.nccumc.org/media-center/index.htm)**

**2008 General Conference Report .....DVD216**  
 The report given to Annual Conference in 2008 by the General Conference Delegation. 10 min.

**All Good Gifts .....DVD157**  
 World Service Fund, Africa University, Ministerial Education Fund, the Advance, Human Relations Day, One Great Hour of Sharing, Native American Ministries Sunday, Peace with Justice, World Communion Sunday, United Methodist Student Day are all explained in short Video segments. 14 different titles on one DVD various times 2-8 minutes.

**Be There: UMCOR One Great Hour of Sharing.....DVD138**  
 Includes 3 segments: 3-minute inspirational message, 7-minutes of highlights of UMCOR work and a music video, "We Change the World."

**Building Churches...Changing Lives: The Ten Dollar Club**  
 Our Conference's own program to help in building new churches celebrates 50 years of ministry. This video describes how the program works and how it has helped many new congregations. 10 mins.

**Complete Ministry Audit, The .....KIT85**  
 Bill Easum's book to use to help 1 understand your congregation's particular character, 2 Diagnose problems and opportunities, 3 Plot strategies, and 4 Extend your mission into the community. Book with forms and assessments. CD Rom with additional printouts and tools.

**Curing Affluenza Series .....VC230**  
 Adults: Tony Campolo leads a series on evaluating our attitudes towards our time, our money and our

stuff. Each tape is 20-25 minutes long, with discussion questions following the viewing available in the study guide. 150 mins.

**DISCIPLE Bible Outreach .....VC1460 and DVD89**  
 Youth-Adult: DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministries is reaching out to inmates in prisons all across North Carolina. This video tells the story of this inspiring ministry.

**Faithful and Wise: Being a Good Steward ..... DVD30**  
 All the gifts that God has given us are part of our stewardship responsibilities. The six, eight-minute segments of the study with discussion guide, cover how to expand our giving to every facet of our lives, "including our time, our skills and talents, our physical and spiritual environments, and our money and possessions."

**Giving and the Gospel .....VC1498**  
 Hosted by Herb Mather, several laypeople give their faith stories concerning their experience with Christian Giving. It comes with a guide book which includes ways to use the video with groups such as: committees on finance, Administrative committees and Sunday School classes. 10 mins.

**Good \$ense, Biblical Financial Principles for Transforming Your Finances & Life ..... KIT 50**  
 This program by Dick Towner and John Tofilon "will help the people in your church discover tools and develop skills that enable them to control their finances rather than allowing their finances to control them."

**Greening Congregations Handbook.....BK530**  
 A comprehensive handbook for individuals or church



groups who want to consider issues of sustainability and conservation in terms of the local church programming and community life. Includes references, form samples, articles and more.

**Healthy Congregations in Every Place.....DVD156**  
A tape to highlight and introduce the Healthy Congregation program of the Conference. 11 mins.

**Help Heal Hearts and Homes in Mississippi.....DVD137**  
A 4-minute DVD from Bishop Hope Morgan Ward and the people of Mississippi who have been helped and still need to be helped as they recover from Hurricane Katrina. Includes CD of promotional and informational materials.

**Journey of Your Mission Dollar .....VC1355**  
Adults: A brief history of women dedicated to Mission and traces pledge-to-mission gifts of United Methodist Women. 16 mins.

**Leading Edge: How to Increase Giving in your Church ..... VC606**  
In this training video, George Barna gives information to help churches learn 'how to increase awareness and encourage good stewardship.' 60 mins.

**Let the Children Give.....BK531**  
This book is designed to supplement an ongoing ministry with children. It will help to teach them how to use their gifts, talents, and the earth's resources in a way to show their love for God. 124 pgs.

**Living Our Promise: Trainer's Tool Box .....DVD195**  
12 complete training Sessions, including: Overview for Church Leaders, Welcoming 201-Advanced Role Play, Worship of Welcoming, Stop the Revolving Door, Leading Through Change, and among the video clips, "The Gift." Leaders book and DVD included.

**Living with Money: Adult Educ. Program .....KIT30**  
This program challenges participants to examine money and its use in the context of their Christian faith. It is divided into 4 parts: What is Money? Know Your Money Life, Making Peace with Money; Balancing Life's Ledger. Leader's guide and example Participant's guide are included. 43 mins.

**Managing God's Good Gifts .....VC1200**  
8 Sessions, 9 minutes each. A nine lesson program on themes of stewardship: Good News, Contentment, Generosity, Money, Accumulation, Estate Planning, Skills-Abilities-Time, Creation. Video contains discussion starters for themes outlined in detail in the leader's guide. Lessons may be used as an entire program for a study group or individually. 76 mins.

**Material Giving .....VC1626**  
Shows how to make a difference by sharing simple things such as hygiene and school supplies through UMCOR's material resource ministry. 5 mins.

**Money Matters: Financial Freedom for All God's Churches .....DVD123**  
A book and DVD from Michael Slaughter who offers a year round program for stewardship. Leadership training and program examples are included.

**Money Talks - General:**  
One day during worship a person puts \$1.00 in the collection plate and it starts to talk back! How the dollars given to the church are used is the rest of this story on video. 20 mins.

**Money Talks: 10 Bible-Based Sessions on Making, Saving, and Spending Money ..... BK 347**  
"God has much to say about how we get, give, save, and spend money." A resource for youth workers on what the Bible says about using money wisely. CD includes optional support materials. 144 pgs.

**Multiply God's Love: A Sense of Belonging ..... VC1205**  
Along with the booklet, Multiply God's Love, this video explains how the structure of The United Methodist Church is organized to help in so many mission fields, support of clergy, strengthening faith and caring in families and communities. Especially helpful for new membership classes and leadership groups. 7 mins.

**New Beginnings: My Opportunity for Giving: Stewardship as a Way of Life .....KIT49**  
Paul Wilkes leads this series designed to lead the congregation through an experience or learning, prayer, fellowship, and discernment. All materials needed are included in the multi-media kit.

**Pentecost Journey .....VC1411**  
Pentecost Journey: A companion video about Hispanic ministries helps congregations learn about stereotypes and provides models of ministry that have been successful in helping churches and communities grow and minister in the name of Jesus Christ. 93 mins.

**Planting Seeds: Korean-American Mission .....VC1313**  
Spotlights the growth of UM Korean-American congregations and missions in the U.S. 14 mins.

**Rich: Nooma Series .....DVD129**  
Rob Bell asks questions about wealth: "Maybe what we have is enough...maybe God has blessed us...so we can bless and give to others."



**Questions of Faith V, Tape 2:**

**Whose Money Is It?** ..... VC1346  
The panel discusses the following questions: Why is it hard for us to talk about money? What does your faith have to do with your money? How can we be faithful in a consumer society? 19 mins.

**Sharing God's Gifts: NCC 2004** ..... VC1691 / DVD103  
Apportionments translate into Mission and Ministries, an overview of the work being done in The United Methodist Church and featuring our North Carolina Conference. 7 mins.

**Simply Enough** ..... DVD 185  
Tony Campolo and Shane Claiborne team-up to lead sessions on simple and just living. Choices about food, clothing, money, accountability and more, are covered in 7 sessions.

**Steward: Living as Disciples in Everyday Life** ..... KIT14  
A twelve-week study resource for small groups in local congregations. Biblical understandings of the role of Steward as the faithful response of Christian Disciples are studied. The kit contains a training manual and Leader's Guide, a training video, participant's Manual and Session videos. An introductory tape is available. 200 mins.

**Supporting Leadership for Life** ..... VC1510  
Adults: The Black College Fund: Students and graduates emphasize the importance of educating stu-

dents for a lifetime of sharing. Includes 4, 60-90 second vignettes. Use for worship or leadership training. 8 mins.

**Thinking Theologically about Money** ..... BK406  
A small group study for youth, this resource explores negative and positive effects on money, attitudes towards persons based on financial resources, the reality of check and credit card debt, what is tithing and more. 6-sessions 44 pgs

**Transformed Giving: Realizing Your Church's Full Stewardship Potential** ..... KIT63  
A 40 day six week church-wide study by John Ed Mathison, with DVD and supporting materials to encourage spiritual growth and commitment.

**Wesley on Giving** ..... VC1202  
This video, book and leader's guide were developed as a resource for clergy study groups, but can be adapted for use by congregational studies. The three sessions are: On Wealth, Rules for the Use of Wealth, and Fundamentals of Giving." Includes Bishop Ken Carder's study paper, "Giving from a Wesleyan Perspective." 24 mins.

**ZOE Ministry** ..... DVD32  
The Rev. Greg Jenks, director of the NCC outreach ministry to the children of southern Africa, explains the hopes for the ZOE ministry program. Real stories are told; real needs are explained.

# Additional Resources

## Resources by Phone

INFOSERVE, UMCOM • 1-888-346-3862

ECUFILM • 1-888-346-3862

Curric-U-Phone, UM Publishing House  
• 1-800-251-8591

Lake Junaluska Assembly  
• 704-452-2881 or 1-800-222-4930

Service Center for the General Board  
of Global Ministries  
• 1-800-305-9857

To Order Benevolence Promotion Resources  
or Special Sunday Materials  
• 1-888-346-3862

## Internet Resources

NC Conference [www.nccumc.org](http://www.nccumc.org)

NC Conference Treasurer  
[www.nccumc.org/treasurer](http://www.nccumc.org/treasurer)

NCC Christian Advocate  
<http://www.nccumc.org/advocate/advocatehome.htm>

The United Methodist Church  
[www.umc.org](http://www.umc.org)  
[www.umcsgiving.org](http://www.umcsgiving.org)

General Board of Global Ministries  
[www.gb-gm-umc.org](http://www.gb-gm-umc.org)

Igniting Ministry  
[www.ignitingministry.org](http://www.ignitingministry.org)



# Conference Resource Persons

Would you like to have someone come interpret the conference budget and programs and services made possible through outreach giving? Call Christine Dodson, Conference Treasurer, or Bill Norton, Director of Communications, at 919-832-9560 or 1-800-849-4433 to arrange consultation.

**THE UNITED METHODIST BUILDING**  
**Monday-Friday; 8:30AM-4:30PM**  
**Phone: 919-832-9560 or 1-800-849-4433**  
**FAX: 919-834-7989**  
**www.nccumc.org**

*Unless otherwise noted, persons listed below can be reached at The United Methodist Building.*

## **NC Conference Treasurer's Office**

Ms. Christine Dodson, CPA  
Treasurer/Business Administrator  
treasurer@nccumc.org

Ms. Ivanna Cole, Controller  
icole@nccumc.org

## **Council on Finance & Administration Officers**

Rev. Danny Allen, President  
P.O. Box 715  
Washington, NC 27889  
(252) 946-3311  
dallen@nccumc.org

Ms. Sheila Ahler, CPA,  
Vice President  
3521 Pinnacle Dr.  
Cary, NC 27518

Rev. Dennis Goodwin,  
Cabinet Representative  
1329 Glenburnie Road  
New Bern, NC 28562  
(252) 635-9704  
dgoodwin@nccumc.org

Ms. Sylvia Harriss, Secretary  
205 Shady Circle Dr.  
Rocky Mount, NC 27803

## **Ministerial Relations Director**

Rev. Tim Russell

## **Congregational Development Director**

TBA

## **Commission on Stewardship Chair**

Rev. Gypsie Murdaugh

## **Connectional Ministries**

Rev. Carol Goehring,  
Executive Director  
cgoehring@nccumc.org

## **NCC Ministry Directors**

### **Children, Youth & Young Adult Ministries**

Ms. Sue Ellen Nicholson  
senicholson@nccumc.org

**Communications, Stewardship,  
Laity, NCC Christian Advocate**  
Mr. Wilburn L. (Bill) Norton, Jr.  
bnorton@nccumc.org

### **Hispanic/Latino Ministries**

Rev. Cookie Santiago  
csantiago@nccumc.org

## **Media Center, Archives, Christian Education, Older Adult Ministry**

Mrs. Laura Bailey  
llbailey@nccumc.org

## **MERCI Mission Center**

Rev. James Huskins  
767 Community Drive  
Goldsboro, NC 27530  
merci@nccumc.org  
888-440-9167

## **Mission Development**

Mr. Steve Taylor  
staylor@nccumc.org

## **Multicultural Ministries**

Dr. Lawrence E. Johnson  
ljohnson@nccumc.org

## **United Methodist Foundation**

Mr. Lynn James,  
Executive Director  
ijames@nccumc.org  
919-836-0029

Rev. James G. Mentzer,  
Director of Planned Giving  
jmentzer@nccumc.org  
919-836-0029



## Different Ways to Give this Christmas

Several United Methodist-related non-profit agencies including UMCOR, Society of St. Andrew, ZOE Ministry, Nothing But Nets, UM Phone Card Project, and MERCI Mission Center offer alternative ways to give this Christmas.

### UMCOR

Gifts serving others honor the birth of Jesus and show concern for the whole family of God. Remember God's greatest gift by giving in Christ's name to help members around the world.

Gifts of all sizes can make a difference. A gift of \$11 provides a school kit to a child, \$20 provides a protein-filled meal including cheese for four children living in institutions in Armenia, and a gift of \$40 can help feed a family of five for one month. Gifts of \$100 can help send

See "Ways to Give," page 7



A feature of the exterior is a covered entrance to the main lobby and reception area.

## Preliminary plan set for environmentally-friendly NC Conference headquarters

A preliminary plan for the site and exterior of the new United Methodist Building project in Greenwood Park outside Garner was approved by the Conference Board of Trustees on Nov. 18.

Located south of Garner off US 70, the site is near the intersection of I-40 and US 70. The project was approved by the 2008 Annual

Conference. The project cost will be paid from proceeds from the sale of the United Methodist Building at 1307 Glenwood Ave. in Raleigh, and adjoining property.

Conference Trustees have worked through a Design Team to develop a needs assessment for the new facility and are in the process of developing plans for the interior space according

to the results of staff surveys, comments received from others throughout the Conference, and guidance from industry experts.

The Design Team consists of the Executive Committee of the Conference Trustees as well as an equal number of outside members serving

See "Conference building," page 2

## Licenses answer prayers, allow UMCOR to begin Cuban hurricane relief work

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) will immediately begin hurricane relief work in Cuba under new licenses the US Government has given to the General Board of Global Ministries.

"We rejoice in this news and look forward to this opportunity to be in mission together with the Methodist Church of Cuba," says the Rev. Sam Dixon, UMCOR's top executive, and an ordained elder of the NC Annual Conference.

Home reconstruction, food, psychosocial assistance, church repair and livelihoods assistance will benefit thousands of Cubans affected by the hurricanes.

### Answer to prayers

This is an answer to prayer for many in The United Methodist Church in the U.S. who have been calling for a response to the hurricanes in Cuba since they ravaged the island two

See "Help for Cuba," page 4



Survivors walk down a rubble-filled street in Holguin, Cuba, after Hurricane Ike struck the island on Sept. 9. Until the licenses were recently obtained, the United Methodist Committee on Relief and many other denominations were unable to respond to storm victims in neighboring Haiti. Now, UMCOR is able to begin recovery efforts and donations are needed. UMNS / Provided by the Rev. Ivelis Matthews.





## MERCI volunteers helped with tornado recovery

To help with tornado recovery efforts in Johnston and Wilson counties, the MERCI Mission Center operated from Kenly Original Free Will Baptist Church in downtown Kenly. MERCI representatives assisted groups or individuals with work assignments.

Currently, MERCI is seeking volunteers to complete NC Housing Agency-funded urgent repairs for very low income households in Wayne County and to prepare shipping containers of disaster humanitarian aid for Haiti. Call 888-440-9167 or email [ahuffman@nccumc.org](mailto:ahuffman@nccumc.org) to schedule a work team.

Donations toward the relief efforts may be made online at [www.merciumc.org](http://www.merciumc.org) or by check. Make checks payable to the NC Conference, and designate "MERCI #S00136" on the memo line. Mail checks to: NC Conference/Raleigh Area, The United Methodist Church, PO Box 60053, Charlotte NC 28260-0053.

## Church court: Structural changes require legislation

By Neill Caldwell \*

The top court of The United Methodist Church has ruled that the denomination's legislative body would need to enact enabling legislation in 2012 to change the church's structure in the United States.

The Judicial Council, meeting Oct. 22-25 in its first session since the election of five new members last spring, also remanded two cases on key issues—church membership and same-gender marriages—back to their respective conferences, citing an absence of official documentation needed to decide the cases.

The denomination has been studying its structure to reflect the increasing global nature of the church, and it brought proposed constitutional

changes before its top legislative body last spring.

The 2008 General Conference mandated creation of a regional conference in the United States as part of its efforts to make the denomination less U.S.-centric in structure and has sent the amendment to annual conferences for a vote in 2009 as part of the ratification process.

The Judicial Council, however, said the amendment does not "harmonize its content" with the rest of the *Book of Discipline* and that enabling legislation is necessary.

The council clarified that the structural changes could not take effect before 2012, even if ratified at the annual conference level in 2009.

See "Judicial Council," page 13

## Worship service honors Methodist heritage and founding of the NCC

On Dec. 19, 1828, Whitakers Chapel was the location where 14 preachers and 12 laymen organized the North Carolina Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church. It was the first organized annual conference of The Methodist Protestant Church.

At 3 p.m. Dec. 14, 2008, that same chapel will host a service of worship

with Dr. John Bergland, chair of the Conference Commission of Archives and History, preaching on the topic "Behold the Lamb of God!"

Whitakers Chapel is a Heritage Landmark of The United Methodist Church. Four worship services are

See "Whitakers Chapel," page 13

## Conference building project from page 1

in an advisory capacity to the trustees.

The site plan has been approved by the Design Team and the full Conference Board of Trustees. It will now be submitted to the Town of Garner for consideration.

Under the proposed plan, the building is placed on the back of the lot with parking in front of the building.

The size of the property gives room for the development to preserve many of the existing trees and clear only about 3.5 acres for building and parking.

The building is planned to be two-stories with a brick exterior on the first story and a textured masonry finish on the second floor. There will be a covered entrance at the main lobby and reception area.

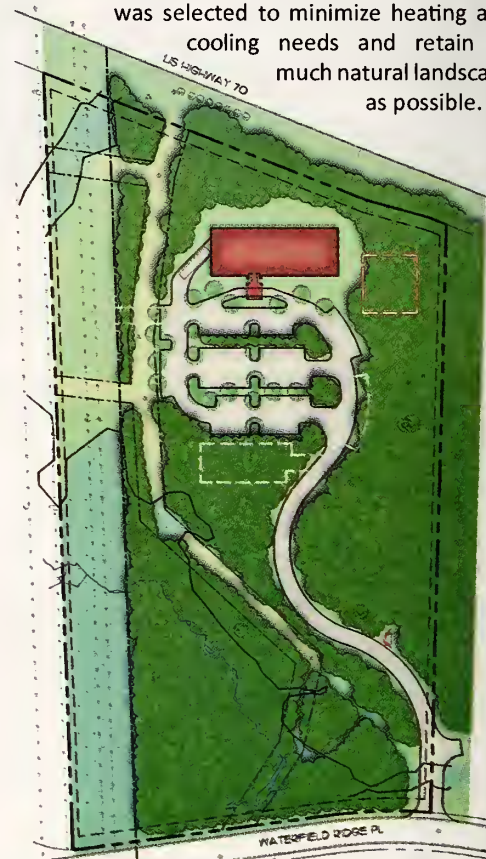
Potential variations in the exterior appearance of the building were considered by the Design Team and Board of Trustees before the proposed plan was accepted.

### A green building

"Some features included in the site plan and building support an environmentally-friendly, 'green' building during construction as well as in future operations of the building," said Cashar Evans, trustee chair.

Factors included in the planning were building orientation on the site to minimize heating and cooling

The building's location on the property was selected to minimize heating and cooling needs and retain as much natural landscape as possible.



energy needs, maintaining as much of the natural landscape of the site as possible, using recycled construction materials where possible, and using energy-efficient windows and insulation.

"The Trustees are committed to using this opportunity to be stewards of the Conference's resources. It is our goal to build this new facility in a way that demonstrates our appreciation of and commitment to the environment by reducing our Conference's current and future environmental footprint wherever feasible," Evans said.

### Project timeline

Trustees are working with development consultants from Grubb & Ellis|Thomas Linderman Graham. The building project is on schedule according to the projected timeline which follows:

- Project design - ongoing
- Site plan submission - Dec. 2008
- Building permit application - Mar. 2009
- Begin construction - April 2009
- Complete construction - March 2010
- Building Inspection and Approval - April 2010
- Packing and moving to new facility - May 2010




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# 200th Anniversaries

## Edenton UMC and Hay Street UMC

### Bicentennial at Edenton UMC

Edenton UMC in the Elizabeth City District celebrated the 200th year of its existence as a congregation on Oct. 12.

The celebration was held in the church's current location on Virginia Road in historic Edenton.

Founded in 1808, the original church, was located at the corner of Oakum and East Church streets. From 1857 until 1895, the church occupied a site on what is now West Eden Street.

Between 1895 and 1979, the church was located on Broad Street near the downtown area at the site of the current U.S. Post Office parking lot.

Since 1979, the church has stood at the Virginia Road address, with major structural additions completed in 1983 and 2006.

The Oct. 12 celebration began with a single unified worship service in the sanctuary at 10:30 a.m. The ensemble from the contemporary praise and worship service led the full congregation in several modern hymns and choruses to open the service.

Hymns selected for the congregation to sing for the remainder of the service were chosen to reflect music sung in the Edenton church since its founding. One of the highlights of the service was a presentation by the Adult Choir of the premiere



Bishop Alfred Wesley Gwinn, Jr. addresses the congregation of the Edenton UMC at the celebration of its bicentennial on October 12, 2008. Seated, from the left, are District Superintendent R. Carl Frazier, Jr.; Susanna Fitch-Slater, Associate Pastor of Edenton UMC; and Charles K. Moseley, Pastor of Edenton UMC.

performance of the anthem "Upon This Rock."

The work, by Elaine Schramm, was commissioned and composed to commemorate the bicentennial and to celebrate the life and ministry of a former pastor, the beloved Ralph I. "Preacher" Epps, who for years served the congregation as visitation minister until his death this year.

District Superintendant R. Carl Frazier, Jr. introduced North Carolina Conference Bishop Alfred W. Gwinn, Jr. who delivered the message to the congregation.

Bishop Gwinn organized his presentation around three basic questions: "Who are we as individual

See "Edenton UMC," page 14

### Hay Street UMC celebrates Methodism

On Oct. 4-5, many heard Jesus knocking at the doors of Hay Street UMC in Fayetteville, and hundreds answered the call as the church celebrated its 200th anniversary.

On Saturday, church members, families, friends and past Hay Street members gathered in the sanctuary for a "Celebration of Methodism."

The Rev. Joseph Brown brought greetings from Evans Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion Church and Clifford Wells retold the story of Henry Evans' quest to serve the Lord which ended in the founding of both the AME Zion and Hay Street churches.

Former pastor Carl Frazier delivered the sermon focused on Evans' last words, "None but Christ."

Special music was provided by the Methodist University Chorale and the Hay Street Chancel and Handbell Choirs.

At the pig pickin' after the service, friends were reunited, past ministers were introduced to the children they once baptized, and everyone noted the changes around the church.

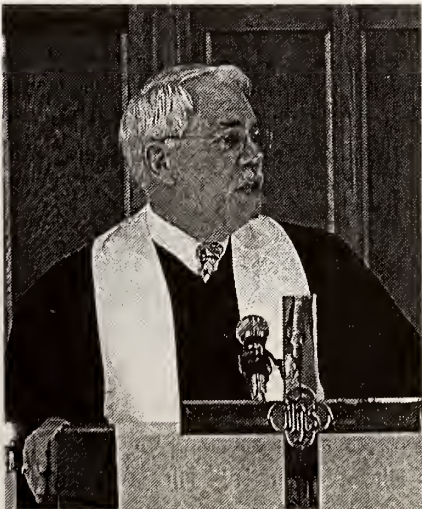
On Sunday, nearly every pew in the church was packed as the Rev. Elton Hendricks, the Rev. John Mackey, the Rev. Robert Christian,

the Rev. R. Carl Frazier and the Rev. David Harvin delivered meditations based on Hay Street's stained glass windows that were imported from Salisbury, England. The ministers discussed the scriptures that inspired each window and explained the artist's touch behind each one.

Ten Ordained Elders of The United Methodist Church assisted in the World Communion Sunday service. Along with Harvin, Hendricks, Mackey, Christian, and Frazier, the Rev. Michael Safley, the Rev. Hugh Cameron, the Rev. Sid Huggins, the Rev. Bruce Taylor and the Rev. Keith Glover helped serve. The Rev. Kirk McNeil and the Rev. William Wells also attended the celebration.

Much was learned over the course of the celebration including the lesson learned through the story of Henry Evans.

Church members, old and new, and friends who were just passing through learned that it only takes one person's devotion to Christ to build a church that's led thousands down the road of salvation. Henry Evans built the church so others would realize what he always knew — that there is "none but Christ."



The Rev. David Harvin



## PASTORS' CHOICE AWARD

As part of our strong commitment to the United Methodist Church, Greensboro College is pleased to announce the creation of the Pastor's Choice Award.

As the name implies, this award is given to deserving students in local congregations who are nominated by their pastor. It provides a \$10,000 Scholarship (\$2,500 per year for four years) in the pastor's name.

The Pastor's Choice Award not only recognizes outstanding achievement among our Methodist students, but also the faith and commitment of our Methodist ministers

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# Help for Cuba is now coming from UMCOR *Continued from page 1*



Entronque Herradura before the storm. UMCOR Cuba had restored this small church and are now preparing to rebuild it after the storm. UMNS / Aldo Gonzalez

months ago.

Over the course of 10 weeks, Cuba was hit by three devastating hurricanes—Ike, Gustav and Paloma—that often crossed the same areas, creating widespread destruction.

“As a result of these natural disasters more than 400,000 homes have been totally or partially destroyed, the economy has suffered greatly, the food is scarce due to the loss of crops that were kept in storages and... (sicknesses) are afflicting the people, mainly because of the contamination of the many sources of drinkable water,” said a statement written by four former bishops of the Methodist Church in Cuba now residing in the US.

UM Volunteers in Mission Cuba coordinator Aldo Gonzalez said, “The need there is so great that it is hard to begin to understand. Imagine what happened in New Orleans with Hurricane Katrina—that is what happened in Cuba—three major storms knocked down weathered old buildings that have been deteriorating for fifty years.”

People who were already vulnerable have lost what little they had. Their homes, clothing, furniture and livelihoods have been destroyed. Crops have been wiped out and fields have been flooded. Even the government stockpiles of food and building materials did not survive the storms.

## Two licenses granted

The Global Ministries’ license, along with the licenses of many other denominations and faith-based agencies, were not renewed by the US Government in 2006. Reapplications have been denied since then as a continuing part of the U.S. government’s decades-long economic embargo against Cuba which restricts such assistance.

Without the necessary licenses, UMCOR could not legally transfer funds into Cuba. Transfers through third-parties, such as Canada, were also considered illegal and could have resulted in fines and risk of losing non-profit status.

In November, after UMCOR employed a law firm to help obtain the licenses, the U.S. government granted Global Ministries two licenses—one for the short term (30 days) and a second one that extends the denomination’s ability to help until October 2009.

The licenses give Global Ministries permission to implement up to \$1.1 million in humanitarian response during this time period.

## Funds needed for food aid and rebuilding projects

UMCOR’s immediate response will be to help rebuild individual homes,

provide food aid and repair churches. Nearly 30% of the churches were significantly damaged.

Dixon reports that what is most needed is money. “Because UMCOR does not have an import license, we will be purchasing all humanitarian supplies from the Cuban government.”

A new Advance for Christ has been set up specifically for these efforts. To support UMCOR’s work in Cuba, place a gift in the Sunday Offer-

ing plate with “UMCOR Advance #3020821, Cuba Emergency” noted on the check.

For information and to give online, visit the Web site <http://new.gbgn-umc.org/umcor/> and select “Cuba Hurricane Response” in the panel on the right.

Compiled from UMNS articles “United Methodists receive licenses for work in Cuba” and “UMCOR advocates to provide Cuba storm relief” both by Linda Bloom.



Tim Russell, Kris Williams and Hope Morgan Ward gather for conversation at the recent NC Clergywomen’s fall meeting held in the Soul Café of Duke Memorial UMC.

## NCC Clergywomen’s group welcomes Bishop Hope Ward

By Para Drake \*

Needing no introduction, Bishop Hope Ward spoke informally to the fall gathering of conference clergywomen on Monday, Nov. 10 at Soul Café, Duke Memorial UMC, Durham.

Fresh from her weekend foray back into late night ministry at the Conference youth gathering Pilgrimage, Bishop Ward expressed her appreciation for the invitation.

Ward’s reminiscing of her 30 year anniversary of ordination, the 1960-something closing of Yankee Stadium, and her charm bracelet bearing souvenirs of the World’s Fair brought her to remind the group of the “beauty of memory and the way God moves us...”

One way God moves us is that “one thing leads to another.” Her family’s journey to visit Methodists in South Africa, with whom the Mississippi Conference has a covenant relationship, brought her into the home of a woman named Amelia who welcomed one orphaned child, and another, and another, until she was sheltering and caring for 92 children in her “warren” of rooms filled with children’s beds.

Additionally, “the one thing” led to 135 children after school every day in addition to those who lived with her.

While “one thing leads to another” in a sometimes orderly way, Ward

moved into the ministry of women in The United Methodist Church. In 30 years, she has found that there are not many new questions from young women who seek to serve God and care for their families.

Women often experience starts and stops in their calling, she noted, while asking, “How much longer do we have to start over?”

Women are now beginning to follow women in local church appointments at a time when congregations still say, “We’ve already done that.” Women still are more likely to serve in small, rural churches, where they are least accepted.

She noted that women need to do a reality check, reconnect with other women in ministry, replacing the “a real looseness of connection” with community and relationships with other women.

Ward reflected upon her “sense of women longing for all that God promises for all people. . .” As “one thing does not always lead to another,” Ward encouraged her “home group” to follow the Rev. Glenda Johnson’s advice to “stand tall,” and seek the horizon.

\* Para Drake is pastor of Core Creek UMC (New Bern District), convener of the Clergywomen’s Group, and adjunct writer for the NCCC Advocate.



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## Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer’s name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org).

Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.



# UM Council of Bishops celebrates Obama's election

By Linda Green \*

With tears, hymns and prayers, a jubilant United Methodist Council of Bishops celebrated the election of Barack Obama as U.S. president, while affirming his vision of change for the nation "based on hope for all the people, especially those who are disinherited and disenfranchised."

During their semiannual meeting, the clergy leaders hugged and many cried in their opening worship on Nov. 5, one day after the election.

"The election of any president in a democracy is a great day," said Bishop Gregory Palmer, president of the Council of Bishops and himself an African American. "...The new president-elect symbolizes and magnifies part of our common life that hasn't been brought to fore in this way."

The council represents bishops from the United States, Africa, Europe and the Philippines and helps to set the direction and mission of the denomination.

In a letter of congratulations, they wrote, "The Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church is pleased to join with the chorus of United States citizens and international partners in congratulating you on your election as the 44th President of the United States of America."

"We applaud your willingness to articulate a vision of change for the United States that is based on hope for all the people, especially those who are disinherited and disenfranchised. We are also encouraged by

your desire to construct a landscape for the United States that is inclusive of all people. We affirm your desire for a more peaceful and just world."

The bishops signed Bibles to be presented to Obama and the future first lady, Michelle Obama, and asked in their letter to meet the couple during the council's meeting next May in Washington, a tradition dating back to Bishop Francis Asbury's visit with President George Washington.

## Reactions from around the globe

The election's outcome brought strong and emotional reactions from bishops from across the world.

Retired Bishop Herbert Skeete recalled how he spent a week in jail in Mississippi in 1963 for attempting to help integrate a Methodist church in Jackson and open its doors for African Americans to worship.

"Today makes the week I spent in jail in Mississippi in 1963 really meaningful," said Skeete, himself black. "It is certainly a blessing for us all, for the country and the world. We are entering a new day."

"This was a historic landmark election for the life of this country," said Bishop Emilio De Carvalho, a retired bishop of Angola. "It makes a change in relationships not only among U.S. citizens but also nations of the whole world. We congratulate the American people for this election."

Bishop John Innis of Liberia was elated that an African American will lead the United States. "Our God is



More than 125,000 people crowded Grant Park in Chicago on the evening of Nov. 4 to cheer President-elect Barack Obama following his election as the 44th president of the United States. United Methodist leaders joined with a chorus of U.S. citizens and international partners in congratulating Obama. *UMNS / Aaron Cooper*

a great God, and to see what he has done in the world...by electing the first black man as president of this great nation is historic," he said. "A new day has come."

Rosemary Wenner, bishop of Germany, also congratulated the United States. "The people in Germany celebrate with you. We all know that struggle of racism throughout the world," she said.

Retired California Bishop Beverly

Shamana said the election made her think of other African Americans. "I think about those older than me, like my father, who never would have thought that he would see this day—and of my biracial nephew, who has a new sense of who he is because of the president-elect. My heart is warmed and I am so happy."

\* Linda Green is a UM News Service news writer based in Nashville, Tenn.



## Retreat for Probationary Members

Seventeen of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year probationary members of the North Carolina Conference attended an annual retreat at the Church of the Resurrection in Leewood, KS in October. Shown are (L-R) Seong il-Eom, Michael Precht, Matt Ashburn, Tamsey Hill, Larry Chandler, Karen Angel, Jared Hanson, Jimmy Wooten, Amanda Flishman, Tim Russell (director of ministerial relations), Jane Leechford, Mary Lou McElray, Farron Duncan, Brent Livingood, and Steve Smith. Not included in the photograph were Judi New and Greg Moore.

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Congregants gather following a recent multi-cultural worship service at Union UMC in the Elizabeth City District.

## Multi-cultural worship held at Union UMC

Union UMC (Elizabeth City) has recently completed a fourth consecutive English-Hispanic combined worship service. Approximately 30 people have attended the services.

The Rev. Earl Perry, with the assistance of the Rev. Sadot Mendez of Center Hill UMC, began these services in July, meeting monthly on the second Sunday.

**Servicio de Adoración  
Hispano-Inglés  
Domingo  
19 de Octubre 2008  
➔ 5:00 PM ➔  
La Iglesia Metodista Unida de Union**

Participation at the services

has grown with Native American, Hispanic/Latino, Meherrin Indian and white worshippers in attendance.

After worshiping, singing, praising God and the Spoken Word, each service is followed by a time of fellowship and food.

Roadside signs lead individuals to the church.

"These services have proven what even a small county church with limited funds can do in its efforts to reach others in the name of Christ," Perry said.



Guatemalan musicians shared their gifts in a recent multi-cultural worship service.



The Rev. William Reid addresses the congregation. He is pastor of Meherrin Native American Church in Winton.

## EMBRACE workshops encourage dialogue and the strengthening of Hispanic/Latino ministry

By Christopher Klopp \*

The Spirit is moving in the North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, bringing together all nations, tribes and tongues.

There are signs that local churches in the North Carolina Conference have begun to embrace Jesus' vision for a united church.

One such sign is the EMBRACE (Empowering Ministry to Bridge, Reach out, and Affirm Cultural Esteem) workshops that have been taking place in churches across the conference for the past three years.

Sponsored by the Office of Hispanic/Latino Ministries, EMBRACE workshops facilitate dialogue among

Hispanic/Latino Methodists and their non-Hispanic brothers and sisters, in an effort to help congregations work toward integration.

The most recent workshop was held at Apex UMC on Nov. 1.

About 25 members of the church were present to learn about Hispanic/Latino ministry and to work toward clarifying and strengthening their plan for this ministry.

The workshop proved to be a time of spiritual growth, community building and personal testimony as the participants sought to be open to the movement of the Spirit.

\* Christopher Klopp is a Duke Divinity School Field Education Intern assisting in the Office of Hispanic/Latino Ministries.

## Balance body, mind and spirit during the holidays

*Editor's Note: This article appeared in the November/December 2008 issue of Interpreter Magazine, a publication of United Methodist Communications, [www.interpretermagazine.org](http://www.interpretermagazine.org) and is reprinted with permission.*

By Deborah White \*

Instead of trying to do more and more this holiday season, strive for balance in body, mind and spirit by "relaxing into the holidays," says the Rev. Eilene Bisgrove, who facilitates a health and wholeness ministry at Pleasant Green UMC in Durham.

Holidays are often stressful because of family relationships, high expectations, finances, shopping, remembering losses, lack of sunlight, endless errands and travel.

Overscheduling can leave little time for exercise while overeating is often a temptation at holiday parties.

Without a strategy, the result can be physical and emotional exhaustion.

Bisgrove, an ordained deacon who holds a Ph.D. in public health nutrition, offers these survival strategies:

- Do your best with family relationships, then "let go, and let God."
- Slow down and plan ahead as much as possible.
- Try to be realistic. "Nobody is perfect."
- Make a Christmas budget.
- Pray, talk about your feelings and seek support.
- Get out in the sunshine.
- Walk or include another exercise in your schedule.
- Take time for yourself. Relax. Breathe!
- Purchase and prepare healthy foods. Look for items that are lower in salt and fat. Avoid fast food and keep healthy snacks on hand.
- At parties, take smaller portions and go to fruit and vegetable trays first.
- Make healthy substitutions such as low-fat yogurt in place of oil or butter when baking.
- Remember that humor can be the best medicine.

\* Deborah White is associate editor of Interpreter Magazine and Interpreter OnLine.

### Recipes for "body, mind and spirit"

#### There's Hummus Amongus

- 1 can chickpeas
- 1/4 cup water
- 1/3 cup tahini
- 3-5 small garlic cloves, roasted
- Juice of 1 large or 2 small lemons
- 1 tablespoon flavoring of choice

In food processor or blender, grind chickpeas with water to a paste.

(For salt-restricted diets, buy salt-free chickpeas. Or rinse chickpeas and soak in bowl of fresh water in refrigerator for 30 minutes to one hour. Rinse again before using.)

Blend tahini with chickpeas. Roast garlic for 5 minutes in toaster oven at 300 or sauté in olive oil. Add to mixture and blend. Add lemon juice.

For pizzazz: Add 1 tablespoon of one or more of the following chopped parsley, cilantro, Mrs. Dash

(herb & garlic), roasted green or red bell pepper, or pinches of cracked black pepper, hot red pepper or chile pepper.

Enjoy hummus in small amounts. It is high in fat, though very low in saturated fat.

*Nutrition information: One 1-ounce serving contains 53 calories, 2.4g protein, 2.8g fat (0.4g saturated fat), 1.3g fiber, 80g sodium, 26mg calcium*

#### Date Honey Spread

Put 8 ounces dried date pieces (or whole pitted dates) in blender with 1/2 cup water. Blend on medium speed until fully mixed. Add less water for thicker spread, more for thinner.

#### Quick and Tasty Dip

For a tasty dip, add one-half teaspoon of cinnamon to one cup of vanilla yogurt.

### Update church Interpreter subscription lists

It's time for every United Methodist congregation to update its list of leaders receiving World Service Fund-paid subscriptions to Interpreter magazine. Each congregation is entitled to 10 subscriptions for their leaders. Five will receive the print version of the magazine delivered to their mailbox; five will receive the new digital version (including all of the editorial and advertising copy) delivered through e-mail. Clergy receive the magazine automatically. Additional subscriptions to the print magazine may be ordered by the church for \$8 each. If a list of leaders currently receiving the magazine needed, help with on-line enrollment or any other assistance with the updating, please call Customer Service at United Methodist Communications, (888) 346-3862, or e-mail [interpreter@umcom.org](mailto:interpreter@umcom.org).



# Ways to give this Christmas

Continued from page 1


a girl living in the Democratic Republic of Congo to school for one full academic year and help supply her uniform, and school supplies.

A guide for giving through UMCOR is available at <http://new.gbgm-umc.org/umcor/give/gift-catalog/>.

The focus areas include: Emergency Response, UMCOR Health, World Hunger/Poverty, Immigration and Refugees, Sager Brown, and UMCOR Field Offices. One hundred percent of all gifts go to the listed Advance project.

## Society of St. Andrew - Feeding the Hungry

In today's climate of financial uncertainty, the need is great for those who are forced to rely on critical service agencies to feed their families. The Society of St. Andrew (SoSA), a national hunger relief ministry and Advance #801600, offers an alternative way to share the true meaning of Christmas.



When the Song of the Angels is Still  
When the Star in the Sky is Gone  
When the Kings and Princes are Home  
When the Shepherds are Back with their Sheep

The Work of Christmas Begins

The Society of St. Andrew Christmas card reads: "When the song of the angels is still, when the star in the sky is gone, when the kings and princes are home, when the shepherds are back with their sheep, the work of Christmas begins."

For a minimum donation of \$12 per card, supporters can send a Christmas card to those being honored through the donation. The card was designed by Virginia liturgical artist Annis McCabe to those being honored through the donation. The \$12 minimum gift donation for each card provides about 800 servings of nourishing food to the



Volunteers from Christ UMC, with support from UMCOR, have helped residents in a number of ways since Edgewater Retirement Community evacuated to College Station, Texas after Hurricane Ike. UMCOR / Susan J. Meister

hungry through SoSA's fresh food salvage programs: Gleaning Network, Potato & Produce Project, Harvest of Hope, and Hunger Relief Advocate Initiative.

"Last year over \$105,000 was raised, providing more than six million servings of food nationwide! This year the need is even greater," said Carol

Breiting, communications director for SoSA. "This card, which has a wonderfully meaningful message presented through a moving poem and illustrative art, is the perfect gift for someone who has everything," she said.

Orders are suggested to be made in early December. SoSA will make every effort to expedite late orders.

Gift donation cards can be ordered by phone at 800-333-4597 or online at [www.endhunger.org/card](http://www.endhunger.org/card).

## Nothing But Nets - Net Gain Against Malaria

Every 30 seconds a child dies from malaria: more than a million children a year. Yet, there are ways to change this nightmare.

Nothing But Nets is an effort to change this reality. Founded two years ago, over two million nets have now been distributed.

Net distributions are being combined with a Measles Initiative so that children receiving nets also receive vaccinations, vitamins, and other medical attention.

Each \$10 donation goes directly toward the purchase, distribution and education about the proper use of long-lasting insecticide-treated bed net. The proper use of bed nets can prevent malaria transmission by 50 to 90 percent.

Donate by giving online at the Web site [www.nothingbutnets.net](http://www.nothingbutnets.net) or by placing a gift in the Sunday offering and noting on the check: "Nothing But Nets - Advance #982015."

As with all donations to the Advance, 100% of what is given goes



The United Methodist Phone Card Project offers a way to help service men and women stay connected with their families during the holidays.

toward the project. For resources to use for fundraisers and church projects, visit <http://www.nothingbutnets.net/its-easy-to-help/>.

## ZOE Ministry - Animals Bring Hope to Orphans

A gift of a goat, pig, or chickens can be the first step toward transforming the lives of vulnerable children.

Recently, ZOE Ministry, Advance #982023, distributed 100 pigs to orphans in Rwanda. The pigs will provide garden fertilizer and serve as a source of income as they reproduce.

Consider a special \$25 gift this Christmas and invite friends and family to help provide the animals.

Online donations can be made through the Web site [www.zoeministry.org](http://www.zoeministry.org). ZOE Christmas gift notification cards and other resources are also available online.

Gifts by check can be made payable to: NC Conference/Raleigh Area. Designate "ZOE Advance Special S00219 Christmas Animals" on the memo line. Checks can be mailed to: NC Conference/Raleigh Area, The United Methodist Church, PO Box 60053, Charlotte NC 28260-0053.

## UM Phone Card Project - Connecting Military Families

In the past 5 years, the people of The United Methodist Church have donated more than 13 million minutes of conversation with loved ones to U.S. servicemen and servicewomen serving overseas.

"Our process is simple: We collect the donations, order cards, and send the cards directly to our United Methodist chaplains serving in areas

of conflict. The chaplains hand the cards out to their service personnel in whatever fashion they determine is best," Judy W. Carter, volunteer coordinator of the project.

With the holidays coming up, these cards are vital. "Each gift received and used to contact family members through these phone cards reduces

the isolation soldiers feel," said Army Chaplain Maj. Nana Bassaw in Forward Operating Base Hammer in Iraq.

"There are so many young soldiers who cannot afford to stay connected to family like they should because of the cost, but thanks to your generosity they are able to do so for at least a little while," said Air Force Chaplain Maj. Sherrol James,

who is serving at Joint Base Balad in Iraq.

"When a soldier or airman asks for a card, it is difficult for me to say I have no more because I know they ask only because they want to stay connected with family and cannot afford to," James added.


The cards have the United Methodist logo and a message stating that it is provided by the people of The United Methodist Church, who are also praying for the safety of the troops.

One 120-minute card costs \$4.95. To contribute to the phone card program, send checks payable to: United Methodist Endorsing Agency (UMEA), General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, PO Box 340007, Nashville, TN 37203-0007.



A gift of a goat, pig, or chickens can be the first step toward transforming the lives of the orphans cared for through ZOE.

Another way to give:



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## The Journey to Bethlehem

### Travel back in time with a live walk-through nativity offered by the Bladen Charge

By offering a living nativity, the people of the Bladen Charge in the Wilmington District hope to inspire "the real Christmas spirit" in participants' hearts.

First conceived by Karen Valenzuela and her mother, Betty Blackman, the nativity is setup as a 12-scene, walk-through retelling of the birth of Jesus.

For two nights each year, it is set on a 2-acre section of Valenzuelas' family homestead.

This quiet, rural setting allows visitors to walk deeper into the experience of traveling back through time.

As Valenzuela described to *Fayetteville Observer* reporter Chick Jacobs, "There's something special about this setting. It's a perfect place, peaceful and calm. It's like people can drive here and leave the world behind," she said.

Live animals and over 60 members of the three churches in the Charge: Bethlehem UMC, Live Oak UMC and Windsor UMC participate in creating the scene. Placards describe each setting.

This year's announcement flyer describes the experience:

*"The journey starts with the travel into Bethlehem. You are greeted by a census taker who will give you a bulletin to help you on your journey. As you walk through Bethlehem, you will see Travelers as well as Mary & Joseph stopping at the inn, Gabriel speaking to Mary, the shepherds visited by the heavenly host of angels, the wise men, the manger where our Savior, Jesus*

*Christ is born, Jesus and the Children, the Cross, the empty tomb & the tax collector."*

Valenzuela explains: "The census taker just helps us find out where visitors are coming from and how they heard about us. The tax collector isn't really mean, but anyone who'd like to make a donation to support the event is welcome."

Participants follow the luminaries that light their path through this nativity.

Golf cart rides are offered for those who have trouble walking.

"We want people to get out, get away from everything that surrounds them this time of year and get in touch with the original spirit of Christmas."

Participants follow the luminaries that light their path through this nativity. You can walk along out here, and soak in the sights and sounds. I hope people stop and reflect on the wonderful gift God gave us that night," said Valenzuela.

This year's nativity will be offered Friday, Dec. 12 & Saturday, Dec. 13 from 6:30-8:30pm.

Directions from Fayetteville are: take Cedar Creek Rd / Hwy 53 East. From Exit 49 off I-95, go 13.6 miles east, turn left 1/2 mile past Cum-

berland County line onto Dennis Harold Simmons Road.

For more information call the Rev. Tim Reaves at 866-5117 or visit the Charge's Web site at [www.bladencharge.com](http://www.bladencharge.com)



## On the Day Jesus Was Born Saint Andrews UMC



For the fifth consecutive year Saint Andrews United Methodist Church, 1201 Maxwell Drive in Raleigh will create a live nativity scene. From the comfort of their automobiles, individuals and families can drive by and see re-enacted that first Christmas.

Featured in the scene are congregation members both young and old dressed in Biblical costumes, portraying the shepherds, the angels, the innkeeper, Mary, Joseph, townspeople and the Wise Men. Live animals also are an important component of this Live Nativity Scene. Sets have been constructed to give a flavor of what it might have been like on the day Jesus was born.

This year, Saint Andrews UMC's Nativity Scene will be conducted on Saturday, Dec. 20 and Sunday, Dec. 21 from 6:30 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. each evening. For more information, call 919-772-4410.





# A Gift to the Community

## Centenary UMC offers 54th annual nativity

By Mary Carpenter \*

The Living Nativity goes into its 54th year of production on the lawn of Centenary UMC in New Bern on Monday, Dec. 22 at 7:30 pm.

In 1954, Mildred Russell Duncan, church secretary and daughter of the Rev. John A. Russell, minister at Centenary suggested to the members of the Sara Kee Sunday School Class that they consider sponsoring a Living Nativity Scene. She had been impressed by one being produced in Wilmington at St. Andrews-Covenant Presbyterian Church and wished to see the birth of Christ recreated in that manner at Centenary.

After traveling to Wilmington to learn more of the structure of the production, the enthusiasm was contagious and spread through the class and to other members of the church.

Some of the original costumes class members made are still in use today, while others were replaced by new costumes made in Armenia. In 2003, a mission team from Centenary traveled to Armenia to carry material and an old wise man costume for the women to create the new costumes.

In 1954, saws and hammers rang out as scenery and staging were constructed and erected. Properties were made, secured or improvised including the metal shepherd's crooks which are still in use today.

A cast of 36 characters for each night was secured, animals were borrowed from far and near. Jimmy and Jane Smith served as the first coordinators.

With hearts swelling with joy and excitement, members watched as the lights were turned on the first performance of The Living Nativity Scene. The date was December 22, 1954.

Something new had happened at Centenary that thrilled the hearts of many – something that was good, something that would become a vital part, a tradition, in celebrating the birth of Christ at Centenary.

It never occurred to anyone that it would not be repeated year after year. It belonged. The portrayal was shown on the three evenings preceeding Christmas Day.

By the time the scene had reached its 10th year, it had become a church-wide project. A new set was erected, new costumes were created, and hundreds of people had passed, paused, or gathered to view the portrayal of the Christmas story.

Bitter cold has often embraced the characters, and rains have threat-

ened, but perhaps less than a dozen performances have been canceled due to inclement weather.

Hundreds of people have played the silent role of the characters, and hundreds played active roles behind the scenes. Some have been actively engaged in some way for the 54 years of production. Approximately 135 persons are involved in each year's three-night production.

### Elvis the donkey and other tales

Over the past 54 years, many people have shared their own personal funny experiences that have occurred during the Living Nativity.

Paul Cox told of the donkey, Elvis, who was a regular at the Living Nativity each year and how he liked to "show off" by making the participants and onlookers think he was going to bite them.

And then there was the time when he received a 3:00 a.m. phone call came from the New Bern Police Department asking him if he knew anything about a white horse found down at the Farmers Supply House on Tryon Palace Drive. Cox recognized that it was a horse being used in the Nativity Scene which had not been tied properly.

It has also been told that each year a special surprise was in store for the newest Wise Man in the scene. One of the gifts to the Magi was a wooden box. Inside the wooden box, someone would place a brick to make it much heavier to hold. Although it was very funny, the rumor got out about the brick and the initiation ceased. The Wise Men are sometimes still seen checking the box before they go on.

The Living Nativity Scene has become known as "Centenary's Gift to the Community." It is not only a gift to the community but a special gift of "a feeling of warmth and well being" received by every person who

participates as a player or in helping produce the most beautiful story in all the Christian World.

\* Mary Carpenter is keeper of Archives and History for Centenary UMC.



## By the Children

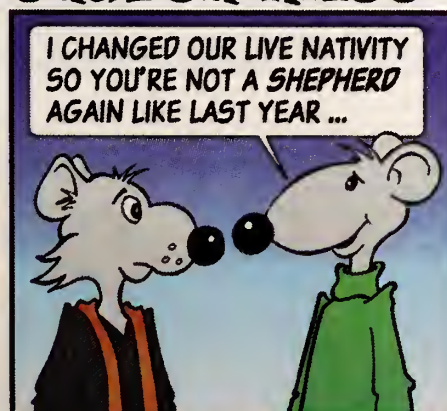
### Pine Valley UMC



The children of Pine Valley UMC, Wilmington, create a live Nativity scene the Saturday evening of the adult church choir's Christmas musical program. It is offered for about an hour before the program begins. Children's Ministry Director, Susan Johnston notes, "There is no doubt this is a *live* Nativity. Pretty much everything is moving except the stable! Occasionally, if I push the button on my camera quickly enough, I can get a good, 'still' picture of the Nativity scene."

## Church Mice

Karl Zorowski



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# Pilgrimage youth event draws second-largest crowd

By Sue Ellen Nicholson \*

Pilgrimage, the Conference Council on Youth Ministries sponsored event for local church youth groups, was held Nov. 7-9 at the Crown Coliseum in Fayetteville.

The attendance of 6,100 was the second largest in the event's 15 year history. There were 281 churches represented from all 12 districts in the NC Conference as well as churches from the Western North Carolina and South Carolina Conferences.

Bishop Hope Morgan Ward of the Mississippi Area was the speaker for the weekend.

The theme for Pilgrimage 2008 was "Pass It On," and the primary Scripture text used by Bishop Ward was John 4 – the Samaritan woman encountering Jesus at the well.

Pilgrimage is intended to invite youth and adult leaders in youth ministry to a new or deeper commitment to Jesus Christ and life of faithful Christian discipleship.

## Giving Hope Initiative

The mission focus for Pilgrimage was ZOE Ministry's Giving Hope Initiative. Youth groups were invited



Jean Damascene of Rwanda and Mississippi Bishop Hope Ward



The Spring Hill UMC youth fellowship was selected by the NC Conference to receive the Award of Excellence as the Outstanding UMYF Group for 2008. The award was presented during Pilgrimage. The Rev. Terry Williams commented: "The positive impact in both the church and community by our UMYF is to be commended. I am proud of each of them for living grace-filled lives that clearly make a difference in young and old alike. They are truly deserving of this honor."

to bring school kits to Pilgrimage for children in Africa. Over 700 school kits were collected.

Special guests from Rwanda – Epiphany Mujawimana, founder of the Giving Hope Empowerment Project, and Jean Damascene, a participant in the Empowerment Project – spoke on Saturday morning along with the Rev. Greg Jenks, executive director of ZOE Ministry.

One youth group leader said his group was ready to go to Rwanda after hearing Jean's story.

Pilgrimage served as the kick-off to an effort of the NC Youth Giving Hope Empowerment Project to provide youth groups with seed money which they will then use to multiply and raise more funds for the Empowerment Project.

## Youth leading worship

Many youth and youth groups from across the Conference were involved in the leadership of worship at Pilgrimage.

Youth providing testimonies were Lauren Hamilton of Oceanview UMC,

Katie Flynn of Camp UMC-Shallotte, and Alan Flowe of Warren's Grove UMC-Roxboro.

Youth groups offering acts of worship such as puppetry, sign language, drama, drumming and liturgical dance were Camp Ground UMC-Fayetteville, Spring Hill UMC – Lillington, First UMC-Rocky Mount, Resurrection UMC-Durham, Hatteras UMC-Hatteras and Mt. Sylvan UMC-Durham.

Youth groups providing DVD's were St. Andrews UMC-Raleigh and First UMC-Graham.

The Rev. Chris Hughes, ministry architect and coach of the Village Church at Pfeiffer University, served as the lead music resource person. The John Waller Band provided a special

music feature during Saturday night's session.

The house band playing with Chris Hughes included Kevin Howell, Elliot Malpass, Ben Lord, Weston Heginbotham, Evan Rodriguez, Sarah Bergland, Kelly Coble, Emily Manning, CJ Pearce, Emily Power, and Jon Pritchard.

## Recognizing excellence

The Award of Excellence in Youth Ministry was presented to Spring Hill UMC of Lillington (Fayetteville District) during the Saturday morning session by the Conference Youth President James Van Staaldin.

Conference Youth Treasurer Jon Pritchard presented certificates of recognition for giving to Youth Service Fund to the Burlington District and local churches: Apex UMC, Englewood UMC, Epworth UMC-Durham, Fairmont UMC-Raleigh, Haw River UMC, Sharon UMC-Holden Beach, St. Luke UMC-Laurinburg, Walnut Grove UMC, and Whiteville UMC.

Pilgrimage 2009 will be November 13-15 at the Crown Coliseum in Fayetteville with the Rev. Ruben Saenz of Texas as the speaker. Brochures with registration and further information will be available in late Spring 2009 from the Youth Ministry Web site at: [www.nccumc.org/youthministry](http://www.nccumc.org/youthministry).

\* Sue Ellen Nicholson is NC Conference director of Children, Youth and Young Adult Ministries.



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## DEATH

ROBERTS, John Milton Roberts (Goldsboro: retired) died on Nov. 8. The Service of Death and Resurrection was conducted at Princeton UMC on Nov. 11.





## Youth Service Fund Grants

The United Methodist Youth Service Fund awards grants each year to ministries that benefit young people. These ministries need to be programs that would not be classified as typical local church youth ministry activities (such as mission trips). The ministries should be outreach-oriented to areas of young people in need. Applications for a grant must be received by Dec.15 to be considered. The application form is available for download on the Youth Service Fund page of the Conference Youth Ministry Web site [www.nccumc.org/youthministry](http://www.nccumc.org/youthministry). The application is also available by mail upon request from the Office of Youth Ministries at the United Methodist Building.

## Social Justice Grants Available

Jan.10 is the deadline to apply for an Ethnic Local Church Grant from the United Methodist General Board of Church & Society (GBCS). The grants program is to strengthen ethnic local churches through education, advocacy or leadership training and development as they engage in social justice. For more information and links to download the grant application please go to: [www.umc-gbcs.org](http://www.umc-gbcs.org), click on Leadership Development, then select GBGS Grants on the bottom left of the page.

## Caring for Creation – Justice for God’s Earth and God’s Children

“Caring for Creation” coming March 5-8, 2009 at Lake Junaluska, will address how the faith community can promote justice for the Earth and its people. The seminar will provide biblical and theological support for developing opportunities for faith communities to be caretakers of this planet. Participants will attend three of 15 workshops. For details and registration, please see [www.lakejunaluska.com/caring-for-creation.aspx](http://www.lakejunaluska.com/caring-for-creation.aspx).

## Help Seekers Find Local Churches

United Methodist Communications provides a site for persons who are seeking a local United Methodist Church. The site, “Find A Church,” provides information such as physical location of the facility, worship times, telephone numbers, web site information, and directions to the church. Be sure to list the physical address for the church. Please take the time to periodically check and update listed information by going [www.umc.org](http://www.umc.org) and selecting “Find A Church” from the top menu bar. A GCFA number is required to make updates. The GCFA number for each local church is listed in the Conference Journal in the Tables I, II, or III, by districts.

## Church Fundraising in Difficult Times

“Funding the Church” is a document addressing fundraising in difficult times. It offers suggestions on how to develop a case for support and ways to thank donors. Jim Hanna, director of the Lake Junaluska Foundation and SEJ director of development, compiled the resource. The fourth issue is available from the NC Conference Web site at [www.nccumc.org/news-info.htm](http://www.nccumc.org/news-info.htm). To receive past or future issues, e-mail [jhanna@lakejunaluska.com](mailto:jhanna@lakejunaluska.com).

## Liberia Missionary Changing the Lives of Ex-Combatants

Herbert and Mary Zigbuo are North Carolina-supported missionaries to Liberia. In sharing the love of Christ, Herbert is working to bring hope and life to ex-combatants. In this essential ministry, Herbert provides vocational training and the possibility of a peaceful future. For more information, visit [http://nccmission.org/zigbuo's\\_ministry.htm](http://nccmission.org/zigbuo's_ministry.htm).

## Health and Wholeness Event Grants Available for Clergy of Small-Membership Churches

Applications are now being accepted for the Summer Collegium, a Lilly Endowment project in support of small congregations. Twenty-five clergy and their spouses/partners from all Christian denominations will be invited to spend nine days at Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, VA, focusing on Body, Mind, and Soul: Celebrating, Strengthening and Sustaining Clergy Wholeness in Small Congregations.

This event will be June 24-July 1, 2009, and applications must be post-marked by Dec. 15 to be considered. All expenses for the event, including travel, meals, lodging, books, pulpit supply and child care at home are paid for by the grant. For more information and an application packet, visit the Web site at [www.vts.edu/education/collegium](http://www.vts.edu/education/collegium) or call Marilyn Johns at 703-461-1760.

## National Farm Workers Ministry Intern Available to Speak at Churches

Alexandria Jones, a mission intern working with the National Farm Workers Ministry is available to speak with congregations regarding farm worker ministry and how churches can be engaged in ministry with workers who are often forgotten or are targets of crime and exploitation. Contact Alex at [ajones@nfwm.org](mailto:ajones@nfwm.org) or call (919) 489-4485.



December	January
1 Annual Conference Program Planning Committee; 5:30 pm	1 UM Building closed for New Year's holiday
Conference Connectional Table; 10a.m. – 4p.m., Methodist Building	3 Youth Service Fund Task Force Meeting, 10 am; Methodist Building
3 Task Force on Institutional Relations; Methodist Building, 10am	10 Conference Council on Youth Ministries Meeting, 10 am; Methodist Building
4 Children's Ministry Team Meeting, 1pm; Methodist Building	10 UMW Executive Committee Meeting, 9:30am Whitley Memorial UMC, Smithfield
6 Pilgrimage Planning Team, 10a.m.; Methodist Building	18 Human Relations Sunday
6 Kaleidoscope Design Team, 1:30p.m.; Methodist Building	19 UM Building closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday observance
11 Christian Educators Fellowship Lunch and Meeting	30-2/1 PK Getaway; Rockfish Outdoor Center
24-25 UM Building closed for Christmas holiday	31 Minister's Transition Fund 2008 Contributions Due

For more information on upcoming North Carolina Conference events, visit the conference web site at [www.nccumc.org](http://www.nccumc.org) and click on “Calendar” at the top of the page.





By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

## January 4, 2009

**Text: Exodus 1:8-21**  
**"Midwives Serve God"**

A new year. For some it is a time of resolutions; for some, it is a time for setting aside the past; for some it is a time of new beginnings. No matter how we approach these early days of 2009, one thing is certain: we do not always know how July is going to be different because of decisions made in January. If I give up desserts (Don't count on it!), will I lose twenty pounds? If I accept a new job, will the company still be in business in six months? If I inherit \$5,000,000, will I be the same person that I was before the windfall?

The midwives in this week's lesson do not realize the implication of their decision to violate the Pharaoh's order to kill all the Hebrew baby boys (Exodus 1:17).

Little did they know that their decision would make possible the birth (and life) of the great liberator, Moses (Exodus 2).

Little did they know that their faithfulness would be part of God's grand story of delivering the Hebrew people. They thought they were delivering a few babies and instead they delivered a nation!

The core of this study text is the midwives' insistence of obeying God rather than human rulers. People of faith struggle with the balance between governing authorities and

the call of God. Take a look at Romans 13:1 and then read Acts 5:29. What is the place of civil disobedience?

The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church state, "But governments, no less than individuals, are subject to the judgment of God. Therefore, we recognize the right of individuals to dissent when acting under the constraint of conscience and, after having exhausted all legal recourse, to resist or disobey laws that they deem to be unjust or that are discriminately enforced."

That is strong and dangerous talk. And the action of the midwives is strong and dangerous action. They even get to the borders of morality by telling a teasing untruth (Exodus 1:19). And they did all of this without knowing what the consequences would be.

That's the way it is when we are faithful to God. We do not know how God will use our faithfulness. We do not get to write the script.

Faithfulness can lead to martyrdom. Faithfulness can lead to public honor. Faithfulness can lead to no evident change.

But it is January. It is time for faithfulness.

### What Someone Else Has Said:

In *The North Carolina Gazetteer: A Dictionary of Tar Heel Places* (University of North Carolina Press), William Powell tells how the town of Faith got its name: "Named for a granite quarry opened here by J. T. Wyatt who lacked experience in quarrying but went ahead with his work 'in faith.'"

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of faithfulness..."

## January 11, 2009

**Text: Joshua 2:1-4, 12-14; 6:22-25**  
**"Rahab Helps Israel"**

It is hard to "prettify" this text. Rahab, the heroine of the lesson, is a prostitute (Joshua 2:1). (Other trans-

lations name her a harlot or a whore.) Some ancient students of the Bible have tried to camouflage this fact. Origen (around 200 AD) said Rahab was no longer a prostitute because she received the spies sent out by Joshua. Gregory of Elvira (around 385 AD) called Rahab "the hostess of saints." Hmmm.

So, the star of the show is a prostitute who tells lies (Joshua 2:5). Rahab is not accumulating many points on the Purity Scale. She is not a likely candidate for "Homemaker of the Year." Don't you think God has gotten a little carried away in inviting such a person to save Israel's foray into Canaan?

At least three New Testament writers celebrate Rahab's commitment to help the people of God. Matthew includes her in the genealogy of Jesus (Matthew 1:5); in Hebrews 11:31, Rahab is the only woman listed among the greats of the faith; James 2:25 points to the example of Rahab's good works. It is hard to let go of a story as compelling as Rahab's hospitality and bravery in behalf of the Israelites.

We have just observed that time on the Church calendar that celebrates the baptism of our Lord. The context for this account (Matthew 3:13) is ministry of John the Baptizer. John called for a baptism of repentance (Matthew 3:11).

Repentance, conversion, new beginnings are all a part of our understanding of how God works.

In a sense, God is always at work using persons who need to repent.

So, the story of Rahab becomes a chronicle of someone who is less than pure being used by God for the purposes of God. No wonder we don't want to let go of this story! Even though our own journey may be far from prostitution, there are enough of our own faults and failures that we can begin to recognize ourselves in this text! If God can use Rahab, perhaps God can use me.

Why was it important for the biblical storytellers to include the fact that Rahab was "a woman of ill repute"? Would not the story be just as strong if that description was left out? No! It is precisely the point that the power of the presence of God takes us as we are and changes us to become the person God would have us be.

### What Someone Else Has Said:

Edesio Sanchez has written (*The*

*Discipleship Study Bible*, Westminster John Knox): "Joshua says that from the outset that those marginalized in society are the first to become members of God's kingdom."

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Surprise me again, Lord..."

## January 18, 2009

**Text: Joshua 3:1-13**  
**"Joshua Leads Israel"**

In most congregations, people seem to prefer to sit near the back of the sanctuary. I used to think that was so folks could beat the Baptists to the restaurant. Then I heard a theological explanation of "back row desirability." Some scholar—fortunately I have forgotten the name—said that churchgoers like to sit near the back because they had an instinctive fear of the holy.

Well, maybe so. In our study text this week, the Israelites are told to keep their distance from the Ark of the Covenant (Joshua 3:4). We have been doing it in church ever since!

One thing that interests me in these verses is the fact that the journey of the Israelites across the Jordan into the Promised Land is led by a symbol of God's presence (Joshua 3:11). A symbol! Here is a clear example of a truth that Paul Tillich taught: "A symbol participates in the reality of the thing that it symbolizes." If you do not think so, recall the emotional debate during the fall presidential campaign about whose plane had the larger American flag painted on the side. If you do not think so, recall how the 9/11 terrorists chose not just any buildings, but targets that symbolized America. If you do not think so, recall the visceral outrage at seeing a swastika painted on the side of a synagogue.

It might not seem like good military strategy to have unarmed priests lead the way into battle (Joshua 3:13). There is more than strategy and tactics going on here. There is a clear claim that all that is to come to Israel in the land flowing with milk and honey (Exodus 3:8) has come because of the presence and activity of God. The priests who carry the Ark of the Covenant carry the symbol that says "God is here!"

But it is not a one way street. The

See "Bible study," page 14

### Let's Journey To... Greece and Turkey May 2 - 15, 2009

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# Disciple Bible Outreach celebrates 10 years

By Carol Goehring \*

When Mark Hicks launched Disciple Bible Outreach Ministry (DBOM) in 1999, he hoped the ministry would one day reach most of the prisons in North Carolina. Now in its 10th year, DBOM offers Disciple Bible Studies in 70 prisons; 350 volunteers are involved in the ministry, and 7,000 inmates have enrolled in the Bible studies.

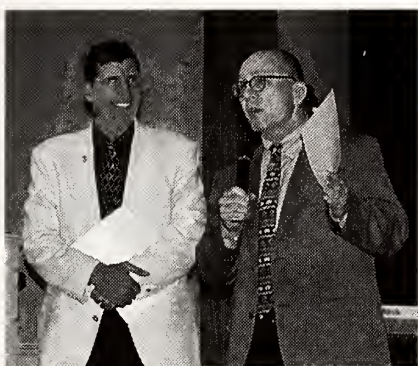
DBOM is jointly sponsored by the NC Conference and the Western NC Conference (WNC). A clergy member of the WNC, Hicks was recognized for his role as founder and director of Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries at the Annual Cross and Key Banquet November 13, at Edenton St. UMC in Raleigh.

A new milestone for DBOM was announced at the banquet: DBOM is moving into the Virginia Annual Conference in 2009.

The mission of DBOM is "making disciples through Bible study to offer God's grace to a hurting world."

Hicks said that over two million persons are incarcerated in the US today. "If that were the population of a foreign country, we would be sending missionaries to evangelize there. DBOM is transforming lives, the lives of inmates who join the study and the lives of volunteers who are sometimes surprised to find Christ in the prison," he said.

Not only is Disciple Bible Study offered to men and women in prison, a study called Rings of Fellowship was developed for teaching the Bible in juvenile centers for youth offenders. The resource also has been well



Mark Hicks, left, listens to statements of recognition to Hicks from William Green. Hicks was the founder the DBOM ten years ago. NCC / Steve Taylor

received by leaders of youth in the local church as a Sunday School or youth group study guide.

Hicks announced that Rings of Fellowship recently was purchased by Cokesbury Bookstores.

Another DBOM initiative offers training in Disciple Bible Studies to pastors and teachers of small congregations in the two NC Conferences.

After receiving this training, leaders in small membership churches can provide Disciple courses at a modest cost to their members. It is estimated that 300 churches across the state have benefitted from the training.

The Cross and Key Banquet celebrated the history of DBOM, and volunteers were recognized for their work in prisons, in local churches and as members of the Board of Directors.

Nancy Powell, a member at Edenton St. UMC, was named Volunteer of the Year for her outstanding service to DBOM.

\* Carol Goehring is executive director of Conference Connectional Ministries.

## Whitakers Chapel from page 2

held each year. The chapel is located east of Enfield.

Richard Whitaker built an Anglican chapel in 1740 on his property in Halifax County. During the Revolutionary War, Anglican clergy in the colonies returned to England. The abandoned chapel, known as Whitakers Chapel, became a preaching point on the North Carolina and Roanoke Circuits of

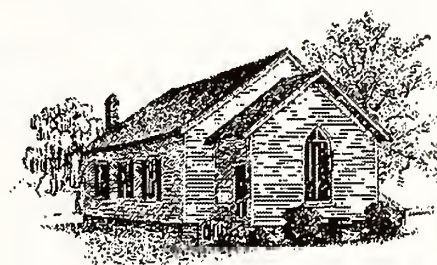
the Methodist Societies.

The church is furnished in mid-nineteenth century style, with kerosene lamps (now electrified) and a pump organ. Church records and artifacts are on display.

The Whitakers Chapel Foundation maintains the building and arranges for the yearly services.

To reach the chapel, take Interstate 95 to the Highway 481 East (Enfield) exit and proceed to the stoplight at the intersection of U.S. 301 in Enfield.

Go straight at this intersection on rural paved road 1003 (Thirteen Bridges Road) for approximately 5.5 miles.



## Brownlee named acting director of Congregational Development

Dr. Irene Brownlee has been appointed as the acting director of Congregational Development, Bishop Al Gwinn announced.

She will work part-time and focus on identifying candidates for new church starts, resourcing and encouraging new church launchers, guiding funding commitments and budget preparations, and working with the Conference Cabinet, Congregational Development Committee and Congregational Development, Inc.

"Irene has a passion for this work, is gifted for this work and certainly has the professional skills for this work," Bishop Gwinn said. "She

will continue in this position until the new director is selected. A search committee has been identified and their work will result in the naming of a full-time director."

Brownlee holds Bachelor of Arts, Master of Education, and Doctorate of Education degrees from NC State University. She served as the first executive director of the Conference Academy for Leadership Excellence and previously served as the executive director of the Raleigh Adult Degree Program for NC Wesleyan College.

She is married to the Rev. David Brownlee, senior pastor of Apex UMC.



Dr. Irene Brownlee

## Judicial council rulings announced continued from page 2

### Two changes rejected

The council rejected two changes to the *Book of Discipline* approved by General Conference when the worldwide assembly met last spring.

The first was designed to make it easier for laity to distribute Holy Communion in remote areas.

Responding to questions of constitutionality from the Western NC Conference, the council said that amendments made to Paragraph 1117.9 create a doctrine of "reserved sacrament" and alters the *Discipline* without proper authority. The church's Articles of Religion explicitly say that the sacraments are not to be "reserved" or "carried about."

In Decision 1109, the council said it would "not become the arbiter of theological debates" and that the

amendments create "a fundamental shift in the way that the Church talks about the elements of the Sacrament of Holy Communion."

"It is quite permissible for The United Methodist Church to change its doctrine regarding Holy Communion," states Decision 1109. "But the means for doing so is not to act on a petition by a simple majority of the General Conference."

The second General Conference change rejected by the council offered local pastors the option of choosing their status as lay or clergy if they have completed the Course of Study but are no longer under appointment. In Decision 1101, the council said the legislation is in direct violation of the *Discipline*, including Paragraph 32 of the Constitution, which lists the cri-

teria for being a pastor.

"Retired local pastors are not clergy and may not vote as clergy during annual conference," the decision states. "Nowhere in the *Book of Discipline* does the local pastor have the opportunity to determine his or her status."

Ruling the new Paragraph 320.6 null and void, the court said the original petition was "fatally flawed" because a local pastor is only considered clergy when under appointment.

### Lack of documentation

Two much-anticipated decisions were deferred because the proper annual conference minutes had not been submitted to the council.

One involved a resolution passed

by the California-Nevada Annual Conference commending a group of 80 retired UM clergy offered to perform same-sex marriages in the wake of a California Supreme Court ruling legalizing such unions.

The other involved a question over church membership in the Alaska Conference. The council said "the record supplied is insufficient in that it fails to provide an exact statement of the entire question submitted for declaratory decision." The case will be added to the spring 2009 docket.

The Judicial Council is scheduled to meet next April 22-25 in Denver.

\* Neill Caldwell is editor of the *Virginia United Methodist Advocate* magazine and covers the Judicial Council for *United Methodist News Service*.



# January adult Bible study *continued from page 12*

Ark of Covenant contains the tablets which marked the covenant between God and God's people. The people are not just "takers." They are also to be active participants in the march of holiness. (Early Methodists saw their task as "spreading scriptural holiness throughout the land".) Note that even in the powerful activity of God, the Israelites are called upon to "sanctify yourselves" (Joshua 3:5). The covenant of God's promise calls for us to seek lives of holiness. And to get ready to cross the River!

## What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Christian Nurture and the Church* (Scribner's), Randolph Crump Miller has pointed out: "The significance of symbols is that they are able to point beyond what can be grasped by the senses or the rational mind...Symbols participate in some degree in the reality to which they point."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Go before us, living God..."

**January 25, 2009**

**Text: Judges 13:1-13, 24 "Samson's Mother Prepares for His Birth"**

Some weeks ago, I was teaching a Sunday School class. To help present

the lesson, I prepared PowerPoint slides. The class was going along well with my carefully crafted slides reinforcing each point.

Suddenly, the remote control switch I was using stuck in the "on" position and the rest of my slides began to flash on the screen, one after the other, rapidly unfolding the rest of my presentation and in about ten seconds telling everything I had planned to say in the next twenty minutes.

It was sort of like reading the last page of a book before getting past chapter one. Ah, technology!

What would we do differently in the present if we could see ahead to the days to come? If we knew how things were going to turn out, would we change decisions? Re-arrange priorities?

If there were PowerPoint slides telling the story of my life, what difference would it make if the projector began to go in high speed to show me the end?

This week's study text tells how Samson's mother rejoiced to learn that her long, barren years were going to end and she would bring forth a very special child (Judges 13:5, 7).

How would she have felt if she could have looked ahead and seen her son marrying a pagan Philistine

(Judges 14:2-3)? How would she have felt if she could have looked ahead and seen her son frolicking with a prostitute (Judges 16:1)? How would she have felt if she could have looked ahead and seen her son being snookered by the nagging Delilah until he gave away the secret of his strength (Judges 16:16, 19)? How would she have felt if she could have looked ahead and seen her son, now blinded, die in one last desperate display of power (Judges 16:21, 30)?

If Samson's mother could have looked ahead and seen all these disappointments, would she have perhaps been in such despair that she would not have wanted to give birth? An angel (literally, "a messenger") helped Samson's mother prepare for Samson's birth. Both Mom and Dad are excited about the pending gift of life (Judges 13:6, 15). Out of the disappointment of the barren years, they come now with a commitment and a willingness to follow God's will.

Following God's will is about taking the next step, not about knowing where the steps will lead.

## What Someone Else Has Said:

Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. (*The Coming of the New Deal*, Houghton Mifflin Company) wrote: "And he

knew that the refusal to decide was itself a form of decision."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "You gave called us, O God, toward a tomorrow that You want to give us..."

## Edenton UMC celebrates 200th year *From page 3*

Christians?"; "Why are we here?" and "who is our neighbor?"

He challenged the congregation to see themselves as a part of the living church, carrying on the work that Christ established and continuing with the still unfinished tasks which Edenton UMC was founded to undertake two centuries ago.

Attending the worship service were four former pastors of Edenton UMC: James Huskins, 2000-2007; W. Stanley Smith, 1994-1997; Edwin L. Earnhardt, 1968-1977; and J. Earl Richardson, 1954-1960. Richardson served at the church when it celebrated its 150th anniversary in 1958.

Karen Owens and Barbara Tuttle, the daughters of "Preacher" Epps, represented his family at the service. In honor of the occasion, they gave the church an original watercolor painting of a butterfly, entitled "Resurrection Reminder," that their father had painted years earlier.

Following the worship service, the 250 people present for the celebration were invited to gather in the church's Family Life Center for a covered dish meal given by members of the church family.

During the meal, there was a continuous video presentation containing scores of photos of pastors, members, and activities that representing the history of the church.

As a special memento of the celebration, the church prepared a full-color booklet, "Bicentennial Celebration: Edenton United Methodist Church 1808-2008," that highlights of the church's development throughout the period.

## CLASSIFIEDS

**PART-TIME DIRECTOR OF MUSIC** ministries for 600-member church in Danville, VA; email lgbenefield@comcast.net. Church has a long tradition of high-caliber music: two adult choirs, adult and youth hand bell choirs, and a community arts series. Two weekly Sunday morning services. The candidate must have a passion for the importance of music in leading worship and its contribution in the overall life of the church. The director, organist, and senior minister will be working as a team to lead our music ministry. The successful candidate will be expected to expand the music program with children (e.g., leading music in weekday preschool program and Bible school) and work with our youth to develop a program that could include instrumental ensembles, choirs and musicals. Bachelor's degree required (master's degree preferred). Competitive salary based on experience. Position is currently open (being filled on interim basis). Reply to Music Search Committee at the e-mail address above.

**PART-TIME CHURCH ORGANIST** for 600-member congregation in Danville, VA e-mail lgbenefield@comcast.net. Organist will be the primary accompanist for two adult choirs, various children's groups and the youth music ministries. Will play for two weekly Sunday morning services, the various choir rehearsals and other special services. The church has a mechanical action organ, built in 1860 by Simmons and Willcox of Boston and restored in 1988 and enlarged to include 30 stops and 33 ranks of pipes over two manuals and pedal. We also have two Yamaha grand pianos. The candidate should be an excellent organist/pianist and share our passion for the importance of music in leading worship and its contribution in the overall life of the church. Bachelor's degree strongly preferred but will consider applicants without a degree that have exceptional skills and experience. Competitive salary based on experience. Position is currently open (being filled on interim basis). Reply to Music Search Committee at the e-mail address above.

**EMERALD ISLE BEACH** - Cottage for Christian families. Second row, sleeps eight or more. Three bedrooms, two baths, a/c, phone and cable. No pets. \$865 per week, \$360 per weekend. Special arrangements for youth groups up to 20. Tommy and Jean Tunstall, 5273 Raleigh Rd., Benson, NC 27504 919-934-4401 or jeantunstall@embarqmail.com

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**GREAT RATES, TARGETED AUDIENCE** For NCCC Advocate display advertising rates or to place a classified ad, contact LeeAnne Thornton at: 800-849-4433 or email: lbthornton@nccumc.org.

## MARRIAGE

Congratulations to Terry Huffines (First UMC, Elon) and Jeannie Gray who were married Nov. 16.





Children riding on the Coats UMC float gave out bags of sunflower seeds with a Bible verse in keeping with the float's theme of "The Farmer Sows the Word."

## Coats UMC participates in parade, hosts festival

Fall is a very busy and exciting time at Coats United Methodist Church in the Fayetteville District.

The season began with preparing for the local Farmer's Day celebration. Coats had a booth at the street fair as well as a float in the parade. This year's float was based on the parable "The Farmer Sows the Word." The Coats UMC float won first place.

This year, instead of throwing out candy, Coats members passed out bags of sunflower seeds with a Bible verse, planting instructions and information about the church.

At the end of October the annual Harvest Festival was held. Members of the community joined church members for this time of celebration.

The festival began with a costume contest for different age groups and then the games began. There was something for all ages. This year's activities included, a moonwalk, huge slide, the Whirly Bird, cake walk,

duck pond, miniature horse ride and a new hit, the corn hole game.

The afternoon concluded with a hot dog supper and candy for the children.

Approximately half of the 175 people who attended were guests and members of the community.



Charles Bullock, kneeling on the left, holds his daughter during the judging for the best Harvest Festival costume. She was selected as the winner of the baby division.



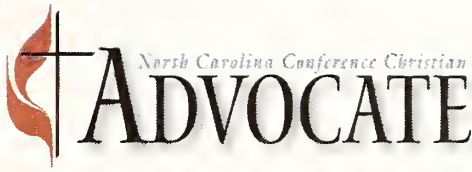
Bailey and Georgia Stone enjoyed a horse ride during the Harvest Festival at Coats UMC in the Fayetteville District.

# Around the CONFERENCE



## Blankets for the Homeless - Riverside UMC

Members of the Early Elementary Class at Riverside UMC (Elizabeth City) collected blankets to be given to the homeless of their area this winter. The children (Geno Willis, Kara Yost, Leah Hale and Haley Smith) collected a total of 16 new and gently used blankets.



**Submitting  
Around the  
Conference  
Information**

Items for consideration can be emailed to [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org). The deadline is the 5th day of the month prior to publication. All articles and photos are subject to editing. Photographs or art should be recorded in the largest size and highest resolution possible. Send in JPEG or TIFF formats. Please send articles and photos in separate files. Photos should not be embedded in articles or in photo viewing programs.

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# 'Extraordinary ordinations' have no official status

## A UMNS Report

By Linda Green\*

The "extraordinary ordinations" of two women by the unofficial Church Within A Church group "has no official status" within The United Methodist Church, says the Council of Bishops.

In a Nov. 7 statement, the UM bishops declared the ecumenical ordination of a lesbian and another woman who champions gay rights, which took place Oct. 19 at a United Methodist Church in Baltimore, "was not approved by any United Methodist annual conference, board of ordained ministry or cabinet."

The ordinations "belong to Church Within A Church," according to the council of 69 active and 91 retired bishops from the United States, Africa, Europe and the Philippines.

Church Within a Church is a six-year old organization of Methodists who describe themselves as "dedicated to being the inclusive church."

During the service, hands were laid on the two women by retired United Methodist Bishops Susan Morrison and Jessie DeWitt, along with leaders from the United Church of Christ, Catholic, Lutheran and Presbyterian churches and the women's sponsors.

While ordinations are ecclesial actions, the bishops said the ordination, "has no effect within The United Methodist Church," has no official status, and will not qualify individuals for appointment within the denomination. The bishops upheld the clarity of the church's proscription that it does not ordain self-avowed practicing homosexuals.

The 2008 General Conference, the top lawmaking body of The United Methodist Church, upheld the church's stance that homosexual practice is "incompatible with Christian teaching."

Although the denomination does not recognize the ordinations, the interest in the service from United

Methodists worldwide, religious, and secular bodies prompted the bishops to collaborate and release a uniform response.

### Effect of ordination

According to Minnesota Bishop Sally Dyck, a member of the task force that created the statement, it represents the facts about the "extraordinary ordination" and outlines the actual effect of what the ordination means to the United Methodist Church. "Church Within a Church is the one that ordained them, not the United Methodist Church," she said.

The statement also removes doubt about the standing of the women as "ordinands" and their relationship to The United Methodist Church and affirms the bishops' and church's understanding of ordination of self-avowed practicing homosexuals. "It was a helpful clarification," said Indiana Bishop Michael Coyner.

The statement also removes doubt about the standing of the women as "ordinands" and their relationship to The United Methodist Church and affirms the bishops' and church's understanding of ordination of self-avowed practicing homosexuals. "It was a helpful clarification," said Indiana Bishop Michael Coyner.

As people express their faith, there are times when the expression goes beyond church structure and polity, noted Wisconsin Bishop Linda Lee, but that does not make the ordination valid. "Our word is clear as a council that we will uphold the Discipline as it is written until it changes."

A group of people wanted to ordain someone they felt had been rejected, added East Ohio Conference Bishop John Hopkins, but there "are no widespread implications to The United Methodist Church."

### Struggles regarding homosexuality

Mainline Protestant denominations have struggled for decades with



Jenna Zirbel (in yellow stole) and her husband, the Rev. Andy Little (right), serve communion to Bishop Jesse DeWitt as Bishop Susan Morrison and the Rev. Traci West watch. Zirbel and Annie Britton received "extraordinary ordination." Both women have been blocked from ordination as United Methodist ministers because of their positions related to homosexuality. Britton is a legally married lesbian, and Zirbel disagrees with the denomination's stance that homosexuality is "incompatible with Christian teaching." UMNS / Courtesy of the Church Within a Church Movement.

issues surrounding homosexuality and ordination. While the United Methodist Church prohibits homosexual ordination, it welcomes homosexual members and considers them to be of sacred worth.

Groups like Church Within a Church seek to change church policy and other entities work to maintain the church's stance. These disagreements have sometimes evoked talk of schism in the church but bishops of the church believe that perception is wrong.

"I don't think this is a barometer of it," Dyck said. "There are some folks who are really out on the edges and the majority of folk in the church are trying to find a way to live together."

Lee, who is chairperson of the UM Commission on Religion and Race, agreed. "I do not believe it is an indication of schism," she said. "I believe it is an indication of dissatisfaction."

The body continues to work toward unity and the majority of United Methodists still desire unity, she added.

Hopkins, chairperson of the church-wide group that brings vision,

mission and money together at one table, said, "the church, since its beginning, has always headed toward schism." But he does not consider that the prevailing spirit because Church Within a Church and other groups "do want they need to do, but there is no intent to harm The United Methodist Church."

### No split foreseen

There are people who are unhappy with their stance and will find ways to protest or engage in acts of disobedience against the church, Coyner said. "Some may leave the church but I do not think the church is headed for a split," he added.

Acknowledging the strength and diversity of the denomination, Schol said the church would continue to experience differences in the midst of a growing, changing, dynamic and global world. "The United Methodist Church is strong and it is going to see its way through any controversies and any issues because in the end, it is not our church, it is God's church and God is going to have God's way," he declared.

Palmer believes the extraordinary ordination and other renegade actions generate conversation but he "is not persuaded that they promote dialogue at the highest levels, where we are really all at our best even when we have differing opinions."

"My yearning is for us to find a way to stay and to hold and hang together" around the mission of making disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, he added. "We can do that but it takes the hard work of all who are involved in the church."

\* Linda Green is a UM News Service news writer based in Nashville, Tenn.

## Ethnic Young Adult Summer Internships Offered

The deadline to apply for an Ethnic Young Adult (EYA) Summer Internship in Washington, D.C., is Feb. 1. The EYA program is for 18-22 year olds, who have an interest in exploring issues of public policy, social justice advocacy and social change through social justice placements from June 1 to Aug. 1, 2009.

They will live in Christian community together at George Washington University. Along with daily devotions, interns will gather for Sunday worship in a diverse range of United Methodist churches. Applicants

must be in good academic standing at their college or university, demonstrate their concern for social justice through extracurricular activity, and have some history of involvement in their church and/or community.

If employed full-time, applicants must show active leadership and participation in their local church and community, including involvement in social justice activities.

The internship provides round-trip transportation to and from Washington, D.C.; housing for the eight-week EYA Internship; commuter stipend

for travel to intern work sites; and \$1,500 for the nine-week period.

Participants are expected to return to their schools and communities with an increased commitment to working with and on behalf of marginalized groups in society. Participants are also expected to share their experience with others from their community, school and church.

An application form is available at the Web site: [www.umc-gbcs.org](http://www.umc-gbcs.org) > Leadership Development > Racial and Ethnic Connections > EYA Internships.







# Granting deacons sacramental authority *from page 1*

mission and ministry of the church, a pastor-in-charge or district superintendent may request that the Bishop grant local sacramental authority to the deacon to administer the sacraments in the absence of an elder, within a deacon's primary appointment."

Meeting Nov. 2-7 at historic Epworth By the Sea, the bishops said the new language is an attempt to describe the extraordinary mis-

sional reasons that justify exceptions to general church practice. However, in all cases, the *Discipline* gives the bishop final discretionary authority to decide under which circumstances to grant local sacramental authority to a deacon, they noted.

Deacons are called by God to a lifetime of servant leadership and to lead the church in relating the gathered life of Christians to their ministries in the world, interrelating

worship in the gathered community with service to God in the world, said the delegates to General Conference.

Deacons give leadership in the church's life, teach and proclaim the word, contribute in worship and assist the elders in administering the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion.

According to the bishops, "local sacramental authority" refers to the primary field of service of the deacon,

meaning the immediate community of faith for a congregational appointment or the primary service setting and community for deacons serving beyond a local church.

## Shift in 1996

The ordering of ministry underwent a major shift in 1996 when that General Conference created two distinct clergy orders – deacons and elders. Previously, ordination to the order of deacon was a preparatory step to ordination as an elder.

The new guidelines adopted by the bishops state that "The church provides for administration of the sacraments through the ordinary sacramental authority invested in ordained elders, licensed provisional clergy, and licensed local pastors, and the new language gives guidance for the extraordinary circumstances that require the provision of the sacraments by Deacons."

Absence of an elder refers to the unavailability of an elder in the congregation or community and is "not for the convenience of church staffs or to fill gaps during vacation, but to assist in the extraordinary circumstance where no elder can be present," they said.

*\* Linda Green is a UM News Service news writer based in Nashville, Tenn.*



## Native American congregations prepare food for the world

Members of the Rockingham District Native American Cooperative Ministry prepared packages of food to be distributed to locations around the world where the need is great. Members of the co-op packaged 2,100 meals at Stop Hunger Now in Raleigh. Members of the team represent several of the Native American congregations of the cooperative. Since this was the first attempt at packaging food to be sent abroad, many were shocked at the size of a meal for a family's daily needs. Many thanks go out to the volunteers at SHN for their efforts to provide meals for the hungry around the world and for providing an opportunity for involvement by local churches and a way to learn more about hunger around the world.

## Mission encounter weeks offered for young adults

The Red Bird Missionary Conference is hosting two Mission Encounter Weeks for young adults who have finished 11th Grade through age 25. They will be held July 19-25 and July 26 – Aug. 1, 2009.

Gather with other young adults from around the United States and focus on the calling into missions rather than just focusing on a project. Teams will spend the week working on a variety of projects and seeing missions from many angles. Each day, teams will spend time in worship with several Associate in Missions pastors and staff.

The week will be hosted at Camp O'Cumberlands, Red Bird Conference's camp. The cost, which includes food, housing and team supplies, is \$400. Each individual is responsible for their own transportation to and from the camp.

Applications are available at the Web site [www.redbirdconference.org](http://www.redbirdconference.org), through email [campoc@redbird-conference.org](mailto:campoc@redbird-conference.org), or by calling Angela Cunigan, camp director, at 1-606-664-2909.

## Methodist Home for Children Sunday



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# Go Tell It Ministries partners with MERCI Mission Center

On Dec. 5, the Rev. James Huskins, MERCI Mission Center program manager, and MERCI's Assistant Volunteer Coordinator Jacoby Davis were invited to spend the day in fellowship with Bishop Corletta Vaughn and the pastors of Go Tell It Ministry (GTIM).

The event was the GTIM 2008 Winter Conference held annually at Edenton UMC.

Vaughn oversees a fellowship of churches from Detroit to Africa. More about Bishop Vaughn's ministry can be found at [www.gotellit.org](http://www.gotellit.org).

Huskins was asked by Bishop Vaughn to come and share the word of Christ with her pastors.

Huskins connected to the ministers by speaking about the meaning of Advent and encouraged GTIM pastors to discover new ways to reach the current culture of young adults lost in the wildernesses of today.

The day was filled with praise and



Bishop Corletta Vaughn and the Rev. James Huskins, MERCI program manager.  
*Photo by Jacoby Davis*

the magnification of Jesus Christ. In the afternoon, Huskins shared of the opportunities available through the MERCI Mission Center and the NC Conference. He invited the Go Tell It Ministries to be in partnership with the UMC in the work of MERCI.

Bishop Vaughn pledged her support to the programs at MERCI, and GTIM pastors agreed.

Bishop Vaughn's support came with a promise of \$60,000 per year to include the salary of one staff member at MERCI.

Dr. Corletta J. Vaughn is the Senior Pastor of the Holy Spirit Cathedral of Faith and Apostle of Go Tell It Evangelistic Ministry, Worldwide which is headquartered in Detroit, MI.

# Deadline to apply for Peace with Justice grant is Feb. 15

The deadline to apply for a Peace with Justice grant from the United Methodist General Board of Church & Society (GBCS) is Feb. 15. Peace with Justice grants are awarded annually. In 2008, awards totaled \$51,000.

Funding for this program is generated through the Peace with Justice Special Sunday offering of The United Methodist Church. One of six Special Sundays in the denomination, Peace with Justice "witnesses to God's demands for a faithful, just, disarmed and secure world." The Special Sunday will be observed June 7, 2009.

Grant applicants must be either a United Methodist or other affiliated organization, or an ecumenical group working with and through at least one United Methodist agency or organization.

Applicants must work toward achieving at least one of the following objectives:

1. Assist United Methodists in understanding and responding to violence and militarism, and in moving and leading nations and peoples to

reconciliation, transformation, and redemption.

2. Involve and develop principal leaders among United Methodists and enjoin the general public in efforts to end conflicts, human rights

violations and violent aggression around the world;

3. Promote just national and international policies and actions

(governmental and non-governmental) seeking to address poverty and restore communities; or

4. Support policies that promote systematic economic justice and the self-development of peoples, in particular to respond to the disproportionate effect of injustices on racial, indigenous and ethnic persons.

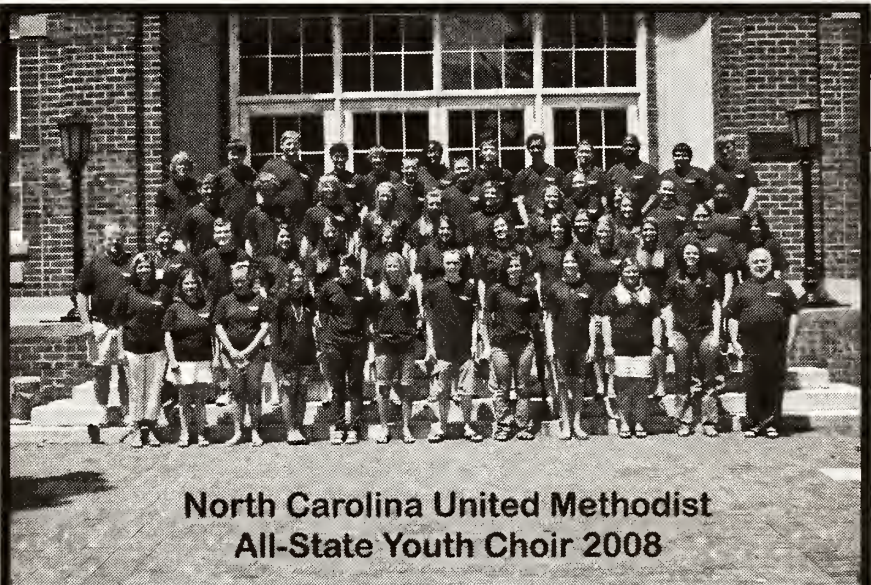
Preference will be given to institutions related to The United Methodist Church, then to first-time requests and, finally, to those including an advocacy component in their program

See "Grant deadline," page 11



# Reflections from 2008 Prayers for the world

- ♦ United Methodists from five annual (regional) conferences attended a summit to discuss sending urgent help to the suffering people of Sudan. A United Methodist youth group from Houston participated in "Tents for Hope," an international campaign calling for peace in Darfur which set up tents at the National Mall (photo below).
- ♦ United Methodists and other Christians participated in a worldwide day of prayer for Zimbabwe on June 22. UMCOR worked in Southern Africa to help provide shelter and food in the Johannesburg area for refugees there, many from Zimbabwe.
- ♦ United Methodists hailed the election of the first U.S. African-American president as a "gift" to the world and a bridge-builder among cultures, social orders and national ideologies.
- ♦ The United Methodist Board of Global Ministries was able, for the first time in many years, to reach out to the people of Cuba when the U.S. granted the agency two licenses for relief work. The licenses will allow the UM Committee on Relief to provide short- and long-term assistance to Cubans affected by Hurricanes Gustav and Ike.
- ♦ In Mozambique, the Africa Training and Learning Center distance-learning resource will help train future United Methodist leaders in Africa. It is a satellite campus of Africa University, a United Methodist-related school in Zimbabwe.



North Carolina United Methodist All-State Youth Choir 2008

United Methodist All-State Youth Choir  
The camp/tour dates this year are June 14-21  
The auditions are as follows:

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## Changes made to the vows of membership *Continued from page 1*

Covenants I, II, and IV (UMH 33 ff., UMH 39 ff., and UMH 50 ff.).

These changes are effective January 1, 2009.

As of 2004, the vows in *Baptismal Covenant III* may no longer be used because they do not contain the vows defined by Paragraph 217, as revised by the 2004 and 2008 General Conferences.

### Changes in the Discipline

Alterations to Paragraph 217 changed the language of two of the vows for professing membership (217.5 and 217.6). The new language of 217.5-6 is:

5. To be loyal to Christ through The United Methodist Church and do all in their power to strengthen its ministries;

6. To faithfully participate in its ministries by their prayers, their presence, their gifts, their service, and their witness.

Alteration to paragraph 225 clarified that all eligible persons enter the professing membership of this church in the same way — through the public profession of all of the vows of professing membership in the appropriate service of the baptismal covenant.

The new language of paragraph 225 reads:

225. Transfer from Other Denominations — A member in good standing in any Christian denomination who has been baptized and who desires to unite with The United Methodist Church shall be received as either a baptized or a professing member. Such a person may be received as a baptized member by a proper certificate of transfer from that person's former church, or by a declaration of Christian faith, or some certification of Christian baptism and as a professing member upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith through appropriate services of the baptismal covenant in our ritual (see paragraphs 214-217). In baptism water is administered in the name of the Triune God by an authorized person. The pastor will report to the sending church the date of reception of such a member. It is recommended that instruction in the faith, work, and polity of the Church be provided for all such persons. Persons received from churches that do not issue certificates of transfer or letters of recommendation shall be listed as "Received from Other Denominations."

### Why these changes?

The mission of The United Methodist Church, affirmed at the 2008 General Conference, is "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." Board members and staff believed improvements could be made to the existing vows to strengthen the connection between professing membership and discipleship to Jesus Christ.

Paragraph 217.5 had called for loyalty to The United Methodist Church. The changed language clarifies that loyalty, and thus discipleship, are to Jesus Christ, and that those seeking to become professing members of this church are here promising loyalty to Christ through their participation and ministry with the Church.

Paragraph 217.6 had become the United Methodist membership mantra: "prayers, presence, gifts and service." The Board noted that the vows of "prayers, presence, gifts and service" were primarily "inwardly" focused and offered little insight or inspiration for disciples of Jesus Christ to engage in God's mission of transforming the world.

Adding "and witness" to the list ("prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness") may help members recognize their responsibilities not only to "show up" but to "show forth" God's saving love.

The revised language of Paragraph 225 echoes the Constitution of the Church in affirming that all persons baptized in other Christian denomi-

nations shall be received as members in The United Methodist Church if that is their stated intent.

It does not conflict with the senior pastor's sole authority to determine readiness to take the vows of professing membership in this church. Rather, it notes that such persons may be received as either baptized or professing members.

And it makes plain that all professing members in this church become professing members based upon Christian baptism in this church or certification of Christian baptism in another and taking all the vows of professing membership in this church, using the appropriate ritual of the baptismal covenant (Baptismal Covenant I).

### Vows and ritual resources

The changes in Paragraph 217 changed not only the *Discipline*, but also the ritual of The United Methodist Church.

The new membership vows and ritual are available on the General Board of Discipleship Worship Web site at [http://www.gbod.org/worship/default.asp?act=reader&item\\_id=46866&loc\\_id=9,824](http://www.gbod.org/worship/default.asp?act=reader&item_id=46866&loc_id=9,824).

\* Taylor Burton-Edwards is Director of Worship Resources with The General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church.

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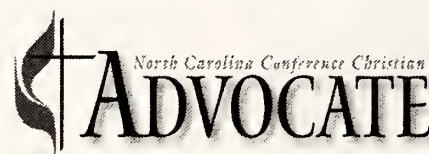
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Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org).

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L to R: Cindy Hamrick, Mary Eaddy, and Matt Roebuck wrap gifts at the Saints for Santa toy sale. *Eastern Wake News / Johnny Whitfield*

# Saints for Santa help struggling parents buy Christmas gifts

By LeeAnne Thornton \*

Three churches in eastern Wake County came together on Dec. 6 at Wendell UMC to help make Christmas a little brighter for some struggling families.

Knightdale UMC, Wendell UMC, and Wakefield Central Baptist Church of Zebulon partnered to organize "Saints for Santa," a store where parents could shop for Christmas gifts for their children. The store was set up in Wendell UMC's fellowship hall.

Thirty-eight families were recommended by the staff of the Wake County Eastern Regional Center in Zebulon. The Center gives local residents access to an array of Human Services and county programs.

With gender and age data from the chosen families, members from the three churches provided new toys or

financial donations to the program.

Parents were then allowed to shop, paying 25 percent of the market price of the gifts.

Carol Gates of Wendell UMC and event organizer said the purpose of project is to give people assistance without simply giving a handout.

Once the selections were made, families moved to another area where their gifts were wrapped by volunteers from the participating churches.

This is the sixth year the churches have sponsored Saints for Santa. Proceeds from the sale are donated to the Eastern Regional Center to fund a diaper and formula ministry.

*\* LeeAnne Thornton is a member of Wendell UMC. Johnny Whitfield of the Eastern Wake News contributed to this article.*

# NC Wesleyan program lowers costs for community college students

Educators at NC Wesleyan College, Nash Community College, and Edgecombe Community College have partnered for the new "2+ Wesleyan Program."

The program allows NC residents who have completed their two-year associates degrees at Nash or Edgecombe Community Colleges to transfer smoothly into the bachelor's degree programs at NCWC—with costs comparable to or below those at state universities.

Another feature of the 2+ Wesleyan Program for traditional students is that high academic achieving students receive even greater assistance toward completing their degrees.

Beginning in January, Nash and Edgecombe community college students can also take Wesleyan classes

on the community college campuses. Applications and registration are currently being accepted.

Dr. Kristi Snuggs, vice president of instruction at Edgecombe, said, "The 2+ Wesleyan Program is an excellent example of how community colleges and four-year institutions can partner to benefit students. The program gives our students direct access to a bachelor's degree, which many of them may hesitate to consider because of cost or because they can't easily travel."

Students may enroll in the 2+ Wesleyan Program full- or part-time and may take traditional day classes or participate in Adult Degree Program courses, which are taught in the evening. For information on the program, call NCWC at 1-800-488-6292.



# Reflections from 2008

## Rising water, swirling wind

- ♦ In 2008, the church's disaster relief agency stretched its resources to respond to natural disasters in the U.S. From tornadoes and ice storms to flooding and hurricanes, much recovery work remains to be done.
- ♦ The U.S. was not alone in cleaning up after disasters. Rain that began Christmas Day in Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe forced thousands from their homes in southern Africa.
- ♦ The United Nations estimated that 2.4 million people were impacted by the May 3 cyclone in Myanmar, which left 134,000 people dead or missing. Following the cyclone, the government of Myanmar (Burma) blocked most foreign aid workers from assisting the survivors. A prolonged lack of access to relief supplies created a "second wave of disaster," according to Church World Service.
- ♦ Ten days after a massive earthquake struck China's Sichuan Province on May 12, the death toll stood at 51,151, according to the Chinese government, with 288,431 injured and another 29,328 missing. The estimate of those left homeless by the quake is at least 5 million.



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## Young People's Ministries to focus on spiritual formation

Young People's Ministries will host a series of leadership development workshops, beginning with a free pilot event in Nashville, Tenn., January 23-24, 2009.

Spiritual Formation is the theme for the 2009 events, called The 'Source, which will be held in 11 cities around the country. The 'Source targets church leaders who work with youth and young adults.

A ministry of The United Methodist General Board of Discipleship, the number of Young People's Ministries leadership events in 2009 has been doubled due to positive feedback.

"The 'Source is one of the ways GBOD is responding to 'developing principled Christian leaders for the church and the world,' which is one of the denomination's Four Areas of Focus," says the Rev. Michelle McCorkle, director of leadership development for youth and young adults.

Additional cities include: Ann Arbor, Mich., Feb. 20-21; Fullerton, Calif., Mar. 13-14; Orlando, Fla., Apr. 24-25; Sioux City, Iowa, May 15-16; Kansas City, Mo., May 29-30; Denver, Aug. 28-29; Boston, Sept. 18-19; Baltimore, Sept. 25-26; London, Ky. Oct.

16-17; and New Orleans, Dec. 11-12. The events begin Fridays at 6:00 p.m. and end Saturdays at 5:30 p.m.

Designed especially for lay volunteers, the event offers practical training for those who work with young people, and will allow participants to experience spiritual practices that can be utilized for effective ministry.

"The 'Source provides a great opportunity for volunteer leaders to get good tools and skills for their ministry with youth," McCorkle said.

Registration is \$59 and includes lunch on Saturday. To register, visit: [www.gbod.org/thesource](http://www.gbod.org/thesource).

A downloadable PDF for sharing with campus ministers, youth ministers and young adult ministries is also available on the site.

GBOD's mission is to support annual conference and local church leaders in their task of equipping world-changing disciples.

An agency of The United Methodist Church, GBOD is located at 1908 Grand Ave. in Nashville, Tenn.

Visit [www.gbod.org](http://www.gbod.org) for more information or call the Media Relations Office toll free at (877) 899-2780, Ext. 7017.

## Reflections from 2008 Immigration

- ♦ Immigration raids separated families and crippled the economy in several U.S. states during 2008. Iowa's United Methodist episcopal leader, Bishop Gregory V. Palmer, responded to a May 12 raid that resulted in the arrests of nearly 400. He called for an end to raids and urged U.S. government leaders to pass a comprehensive immigration policy that recognizes the contributions of migrants to the U.S. economy and culture. (See UMCOR article on this page for more.)
- ♦ In Nashville, Tenn., Juana Villegas' trip to the doctor for a prenatal visit became a nightmare when, at nine months pregnant, she was stopped for a minor traffic violation, jailed and ended up giving birth to her son with two sheriff's deputies standing guard.



Laurie Hayes Coffman, pastor of Calvary UMC in Durham examines boots and shoes at the Eyes Wide Open exhibit on display near the 2008 General Conference held April 23-May 2 in Fort Worth, TX. Each pair of combat boots represents a service person from Texas who died in Iraq and Afghanistan.

## Guns and war

- ♦ General Conference approved a petition calling for an immediate end to the Iraq war.
- ♦ As the Iraq war entered its sixth year, the costs extend far beyond the more than 4,000 U.S. soldiers and 600,000 Iraqis who have died in the violence. Thousands have been left wounded in their bodies, minds and souls—and face a lifetime of struggles related to their experiences.
- ♦ "I am deeply concerned about the returning troops and the mental and physical wounds they have sustained," said the Rev. Laura Bender, a United Methodist Navy chaplain who served in a field hospital in Iraq. "This all-volunteer force has borne the full weight of this war through multiple, back-to-back deployments and has done so at great cost."
- ♦ The church also continued to help society grapple with the impact of violence, particularly a disturbing increase in shootings in schools and on college campuses in the U.S.
- ♦ Two United Methodist agencies, disappointed with a U.S. Supreme Court decision on handgun ownership, urged church members to advocate for legislation to tighten federal laws on gun control.

## UMCOR helps immigrants in Iowa, refugees in Kenya

UMCOR is providing emergency relief in many areas of the world. To find out more about current UMCOR ministries, visit the Web site: <http://gbgm-umc.org/umcor>.

### Iowa Immigration Raid

In May, an immigration raid on the Agriprocessors meat-packing plant startled the Postville, Iowa community which centers its livelihood on the plant. More than 300 people were arrested as undocumented immigrants or who had come to work at the

plant from labor supply companies.

UMCOR is assisting the Iowa Annual Conference in providing crisis management for those affected as they struggle to pay their bills, find other work and put food on the table.

Thirty Latin American women immigrants, who were placed under house arrest so they can care for their children. However, the women are unable to leave their home to find available work to support their families.

See "UMCOR," page 13



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# "We have claimed our mission of making disciples" From page 1

students who commit to leading smaller membership churches for a minimum of five to eight years will receive full funding for their seminary training.

The sites for learning in rural areas have been Sandy Plains, in Pembroke, where a church-sponsored day care is bringing new life into the church and community; Solid Rock in Harnett County, chartered in 2007, with active youth, adult, and prison ministries; and Cedar Grove in Orange County which was instrumental in developing a community garden for a multi-cultural community.

In the area of effective leadership development, Bishop Gwinn listed:

- † Redefining the role of district superintendents to become more involved in leadership, lay and clergy coaching, and mentoring, team building, and vision casting;
- † A clergy health initiative partnering The Duke Endowment, Duke Divinity, and the North Carolina and Western NC Conferences for clergy leadership by identifying barriers as well as avenues to spiritually, physically, and mentally healthy clergy;
- † The Academy for Leadership Excellence for equipping clergy and laity for effective leadership in the 21st Century; and
- † Incubators where a group of probably 15 individuals come together in covenant for 12 months to develop Christian leaders in a warm, caring environment through "L to the 3rd Power:" loving, learning, leading.

"L to the 3rd Power is loving God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength; learning as much as we can learn about being God's servant leaders in the 21st Century; and leading by developing a Mission Action Plan (MAP) and being accountable in this warm, caring environment for eight hours each month," Bishop Gwinn said.

Two Incubator groups, consisting of Cabinet members and two local church pastors, have completed 12 months together. Members of each group will begin Incubator groups, meeting eight hours a month or four hours twice a month for 12 months.

"The concept is you change leaders, who change churches, who change the world for Christ. Changed leaders mean changed churches that equate a changed world for Christ," he said.

"In some ways it is like a Wesley class meeting, going back to our

roots, where we are in community with one another, loving and caring about one another. We pray together, hold each other accountable in spiritual growth, and read an assigned book a month," Bishop Gwinn said.

## Early in the Quadrennium

"When I came to the North Carolina Conference as bishop in September of 2004, I felt there was a crying need in the church across the nation for more effective leadership," he said "and it was obvious that churches in Methodism were not as healthy, by and large, as they needed to be."

As he spoke during district gatherings and in local churches across the conference, he found talking about effective leaders and healthy congregations, "seemed to really resonate with church leaders as if God had planted in their hearts a similar kind of thinking," Bishop Gwinn said.

While serving as the presiding bishop for the first time during the 2005 NC Annual Conference, he continued to build on effective leaders and healthy congregations during his State of the Church Address.

"I have sounded the trumpet for God-inspired, Christ-centered,

Spirit-led, effective, visionary clergy and lay leaders and healthy Spirit-filled congregations that have radical hospitality, passionate worship, spiritual formation from the cradle to the grave and risk-taking ministry and service to the world," he said.

Those words were repeated in various gatherings across the conference. Lay and clergy began to accept the emphasis on healthy congregations and effective leaders as ministries in the conference.

"Radical hospitality, fervent worship, intentional spiritual formation from the cradle to the grave, risk-taking ministry and mission to the world are all possible no matter the size of the church," he said during the 2006 Annual Conference State of the Church Address.

During the 2006 Annual Conference, he introduced the Seven Pathways identified by the Council of Bishops (*a description of the Seven Pathways is located on page 8*) for focus by local congregations. Bishop Gwinn continued to emphasize God's call for healthy congregations and effective leaders.

"Here in North Carolina, as we travel those Seven Pathways, we will

do so on 'two strong legs' – the leg of God-inspired, Christ-centered, Spirit-led, effective, visionary clergy and lay leaders and the leg of healthy Spirit-filled congregations that have radical hospitality, passionate worship, focused spiritual formation from the cradle to the grave and risk-taking ministry and service to the world," he said.

Radical hospitality, passionate worship, intentional faith development, and risk-taking mission and service were further explained in the book *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations* by Bishop Robert Schnase.

The five practices are considered to highlight areas covered in the Seven Pathways from the Council of Bishops.

In later conferences, tools were introduced for Ministry Assessment and Development and for Evaluating and Building Healthy Congregations.

These tools continue to be used in local churches throughout the conference as the second quadrennium begins for Bishop Gwinn in the North Carolina Conference.

"All I was doing was naming something God seemed to be doing by putting these concepts on our hearts. I

See "Making disciples," page 8

## Reflections from 2008

### Church leadership selected



In July 2008, election of United Methodist leadership worldwide took place. In the United States, delegates elected and assigned eight new bishops and re-assigned the rest. The Rev. Paul Leeland, from the NC Conference was elected to serve and was assigned as Bishop of the Alabama-West Florida Conference.

In the photo above, a kneeling Leeland is being kissed in congratulations and blessing by former NC Conference Bishop, Marion Edwards. The photo was taken by NCC Communications Director, Bill Norton, and was selected as one of 35 photos used by the UM News Service for a year-in-review slideshow.

Elsewhere in the world, the Rev. Joaquina Filipe Nhanala was elected in July as the first female United Methodist bishop in Africa. Nhanala, 51, was the pastor of Matola UMC in Mozambique and succeeded

Bishop João Somane Machado, who retired as the leader of the Mozambique area. Bishop Eben Nhwatiwa was re-elected to lead the denomination's Zimbabwe area in a nation challenged by political and economic upheaval.

United Methodist Bishop David Kekumba Yemba was re-elected to oversee the church's Central Congo Area after four years of service. With his re-election, he is now a bishop for life.

Bishop Rosemarie Wenner, 53, was re-elected to lead the church's 65,000 German United Methodists in 500 congregations. United Methodists in the Philippines celebrated their 100th anniversary as an annual conference and elected the Rev. Rodolfo Alfonso Juan and the Rev. Lito Cabacungan Tanganan, while Bishop Leo Soriano was re-elected.



## Making disciples from page 7

had nothing to do directly about the documents that were developed here. I was asked questions for input, but I did not guide healthy congregation documents or those on effective clergy. My primary role was that of input, a distant encourager, a cheerleader, if you will," Bishop Gwinn said.

### Some criticism

During that time he received some criticism, primarily from clergy, about using secular books and applying ideas in the books to the church.

Some of these books included *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable* by Patrick M. Lencioni, *Good to Great* by Jim Collins, *The Leadership Challenge* by Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner, and *4 Elements of Success* by Laurie Beth Jones.

Also included were non-secular books such as *Resurrecting Excellence* by L. Gregory Jones and Kevin Armstrong and *God's Potters* by Jackson Carroll.

"I think God moves in wonderful ways through his church and beyond his church. God plants truth everywhere, indiscriminately. I think God is no respecter of persons or groups

so when truth can thrive and grow I think God puts the seeds. I think there are principles of good leadership within and beyond the church," Bishop Gwinn said.

"In *Good to Great*, Collins defines a level five leader as a humble person who was very passionate about their call. There is something Biblical about that. The Apostle Paul was a very humble person, he felt so unwor-

thy yet he was passionate. He was convinced he needed to get as many people in the kingdom as he could before the darkness fell," he said.

"Jesus did not seem to have trouble pointing out truth wherever it existed. I don't think God is trying to convey all truth that God wants to convey just through religious writers," Bishop Gwinn said.

"What we have been doing

during this first quadrennium is a movement, not a program. We are not talking about something that is time dated.

"For example, a program may be done for one or more years and then another program begins. A movement is something that continues to move

See "Making disciples," page 9

## TRAVELING THE PATHWAYS IN 2008

### Stronger leaders, Wesleyan discipleship

Local, district, and conference-wide events supported the Seven Pathways areas of strengthening clergy and lay leadership and teaching the Wesleyan model of discipleship.

For youth, the confirmation programs at their local church further develop the foundations of their faith. Events such as the one pictured on the left at Chestnut Ridge, bring together confirmands from various churches to broaden their understanding.

A variety of programs focusing on these pathways are offered for adults. In 2008, they included: "Living Life to the Fullest" older adult event, the UMW School of Christian Mission, the Clergy Health Initiative, and the "Embracing God's Diversity" convocation hosted by the Southeastern Jurisdiction

The No Man Left Behind leadership conferences (one held at St. James UMC in Greenville is pictured on the right) are impacting the lives of men throughout the conference.



## TRAVELING THE SEVEN PATHWAYS ON TWO STRONG LEGS:

### EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND HEALTHY CONGREGATIONS

The Council of Bishops identified Seven Pathways for local church use when making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

This description of the Seven Pathways comes from the Bishop's State of the Church Address to the NC Annual Conference in 2006.

Scripture verses were added for further reference.

THE SEVEN PATHWAYS

1. **Transforming existing congregations.** Once again, this is at the heart of our vision here in this conference and I will speak more about this pathway later in this address. **Acts 10: 28**

2. **Developing new congregations** in churches that are more than 10 years old. It takes 72 members to win one disciple. In churches that are between 5 to 10 years old it takes 17 members to win one disciple. In churches that are less than 3 years old it takes 2 members to win 1 disciple for Jesus. That alone should show us what powerful tools of evangelism new church launches are. Further, it is important to remember that we now have 20% of our churches where 80% of the American population lives. **Revelation 1-3**

3. **Strengthening clergy and lay leadership.** This is at the heart of our vision here this conference and I will speak more about this pathway later in this address. **Philippians 3:13-14; 2nd Timothy 2:14**

4. **Teaching the Wesleyan model** of forming disciples of Jesus Christ. I am so pleased that our 2005 statistics show that we have 3,735 more accountability groups here in the North Carolina Conference than we had last year. We are moving in the right direction! **Acts 1:8; Acts 16:9-10**

5. **Reaching and transforming the lives of new generations of children.** Did you know that there are 75 million children and youth in the Millennial generation? That's a larger generation than the Baby Boomer generation! It's the largest generation we've ever had in America. And yet, the 2005 statistics of our North Carolina Conference show that we had 3,144 fewer children and youth in our Sunday school classes every Sunday than we did in 2004! We experienced a 342 loss in average weekly attendance at our UMYF meetings! The number of children and youth in society has been rising sharply but the number we are reaching is significantly declining. **Matthew 28: 19-20**

6. **Eliminating poverty in community with the poor.** That means we eliminate poverty not with a handout but a hand up. **Matthew 19:14; Acts 2:39; Proverbs 22:6**

7. **Expanding racial / ethnic ministries.** Racial / ethnic communities, and especially the growing Hispanic/Latino areas in North Carolina, clearly are fields where God calls on us to "Go and Make Disciples." **Deuteronomy 15:7; Luke 10**



## Making disciples for the transformation of the world continued from page 8

leadership toward the mind of Christ. That is excellence. 'Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ' (Phil. 2:5-8)," Bishop Gwinn said.

The conference has laid the firm base for having healthy congregations and effective leaders, Bishop Gwinn said, during the first quadrennium, but the work is not finished.

"For the new quadrennium (2009-2012) one of the challenges is to stay on focus with the movement and to live more deeply into the movement. Some of what we have done is we have laid down some important foundation stones but we have a lot of building to do on those foundation stones," he said.

As examples, Bishop Gwinn said a good foundation stone exists for the Academy for Leadership Excellence, but it is not built.

"We have so much more to do with our clergy and laity and teams of people through the Leadership Academy," he said.

"We are hardly on first base with healthy clergy, spiritually, mentally, healthy clergy—just on first base," he said. The Thriving Rural Community Initiative is another ministry on first base.

"A great injustice I would do to this conference is to take it into a new territory without continuing to build on these foundations we have laid, but there is room for us to do more."

"We have not developed enough conversation around extravagant generosity where we have some conversation going around the other four: radical hospitality, passionate worship, intentional faith development from the cradle to the grave

and risk-taking mission and service," he said.

Extravagant generosity is the fifth element listed in *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*. It describes sharing and giving that exceeds all expectations and giving in service to God and neighbor.

Reaching the new generation of children and youth and ethnic ministries were additional areas from the Council of Bishop's Seven Pathways that Bishop Gwinn said had not been sufficiently addressed.

"These are areas I would like us to sharpen our focus in the new quadrennium, while not losing the attention we are giving to the other pieces," he said.

When asked about goal accomplishment, Bishop Gwinn said "anything worth accomplishing will not be accomplished during my lifetime."

"I am working on the principle that it is not about Al Gwinn, it is about the kingdom. So, my vision needs to stay on kingdom and not on things that I can point to that were accomplished under my leadership only."

"At the end of my second quadrennium in North Carolina, I hope to see the kingdom growing in such way that I just pass the baton," Bishop Gwinn said.

Looking further than the second quadrennium, Bishop Gwinn expressed some thoughts on where the conference could be.

"Using 2008 as the base, by 2018, what I am trying to position the church for is thriving congregations:

- + With 90% of congregational growth by confessions of faith every year

### TRAVELING THE PATHWAYS Racial / ethnic ministries expand



Throughout the conference, churches responded to the call to expand racial/ethnic ministries. The children in the image to the left received individual blessings from Bishop Al Gwinn during the conference-wide "Dia de los Niños" event.

EMBRACE workshops led by the Conference office of Hispanic/Latino Ministries have been sponsored by local churches interested in embracing Jesus' vision for a united church. The workshops facilitate dialog among Hispanic/Latino and non-Hispanic/Latino United Methodists.

Members of Carr UMC in Durham, whose membership had declined over time, voted to give their church property to Shepherd's House, a thriving congregation of mainly immigrants from Zimbabwe.

Multi-cultural worship services, such as those held at Union UMC in the Elizabeth City District have brought together Native American, Hispanic/Latino, Meherrin Indian, and white worshippers.

- + With almost every congregation significantly involved in its community
- + With 70% of conference congregations sending short-term missionaries
- + With 10% of local officials and state politicians being United Methodists
- + With 25 strong Hispanic and 15 African-American congregations

And:

- + Average age of clergy will have

dropped 10 years

- + Average tenure of pastorates is 10 years
- + Twice as many children are in conference churches
- + Three times as many youth are involved in our churches, and
- + Thousands of people are attending annual prayer concerts," Bishop Gwinn said.

\* Bill Norton is NC Conference director of communications and editor of the NCC Christian Advocate.

## TRAVELING THE PATHWAYS IN 2008

### Healthy congregations — transforming lives

NC Conference churches reached beyond their walls in mission and ministry — transforming those they serve as well as themselves. Their efforts made a lasting impact on areas of the Seven Pathways including transforming the lives of children and eliminating poverty.

Long Memorial UMC (bottom left photo) in Roxboro is dedicated to getting books to Person County children in need through their partnership with Communities in Schools and First Book.

Among many churches supporting the efforts to end hunger, food was packaged for Stop Hunger Now (center and right bottom photos) by volunteers from St. Luke, UMC, Pine Forest UMC, Fremont UMC, Jefferson UMC, and Lucama UMC. They gathered at Stop Hunger Now's Goldsboro Sharehouse, located in the MERCI Mission Center. Meals were sent to Afghanistan for distribution by military chaplains to villages around the base.

Twenty pounds of items such as magazines, snacks, games, and hygiene products were collected by the Junior Class of Buckhorn UMC of Moncure (top right photo). The students wrote personal cards of support and encouragement to an Army Reserve friend in Iraq.





# An open letter from Bishop Al Gwinn

December 2008

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Grace and Peace to you from our Lord Jesus Christ! I trust you are rejoicing in this blessed season of expectancy.

The news that the National Bureau of Economic Research announced on Monday that the United States has been in an economic recession for about a year comes as no surprise to us. We have seen and felt the pain that the current economic conditions have had on every aspect of our lives.

The only reassurance in which we can genuinely trust is found in the same words we turn to for reassurance throughout all other times in our lives, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear." (Ps. 46:1-2)

It is in times of great stress and uncertainty that we need to center our thoughts around the One that is in charge and the One who has all things under control.

However difficult, we must remind ourselves of the covenant we have with God, our Provider; and, the trust he has placed in us to be faithful in all times. Remember, hope is the spirit that binds us together as people of faith – hope in a faithful God and a commitment to instill that same hope in others.

Our North Carolina Annual Conference maintains an optimistic outlook throughout these trying economic times and will monitor closely any condition that will need our special attention as we move forward in the vision of this conference.

We maintain a firm conviction that our churches will rise up in faithfulness to the work God has laid out for us to do.

We are thankful for the response we are receiving on apportioned giving from all churches! And, we continue to encourage faithful commitments to these first mile givings.

In a world facing these economic challenges, there are tremendous opportunities for ministry as we reach out to those around us who are searching for meaning in their struggles.

Our connectional giving allows our denomination to continue to reach out to those searching and to show them The Way to real peace!

As we live into this Advent season, may we all take time to remember how truly blessed we are as people of faith – and share freely out of His generosity! May we pray incessantly

for those searching for that hope and comfort that is so desperately needed in their lives.

Finally, know that you are in our prayers as you lead your people to "look up" in this wonderful season of expectancy! May hope, love, joy and peace light the way for us!

Faithfully,



P.S. "Indeed, you will receive a full measure, a generous helping, poured into your hands, All that you can hold. The measure you use for others is the one that God will use for you." (Luke 6:38)

## GCFA's Economic Advisory Committee remembers the past, begins looking forward

Economic challenges still lie ahead, but the church has weathered similar downturns. That was one of the conclusions reached by members of The General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) Economic Advisory Committee after its first meeting December 5, 2008 in Nashville, Tennessee.

The Committee – which includes economists, financial experts, researchers, and church leaders from across the country – is in the early stages of developing an outlook for the coming months. Based upon current data and some assumptions of some future events, the group anticipates the economy should be in recovery by the second half of 2009.

"Each recession is unique, so predicting the duration of the current recession is inherently difficult," said Don House, an economist and committee member. "We believe there is a clear intention among policy makers to implement effective measures."

The Committee will continue to closely monitor the economy, and will

also look into how economic research can benefit the work of the denomination, its annual conferences, and its local churches, while keeping in mind the Church's mission.

"We must look with a theological eye towards the use of all of our resources, letting both our visions for ministry and the example of Jesus' mission of bringing good news to the poor, letting the oppressed go free, and proclaiming Jubilee shape the use of our resources," Dustin Petz, pastor of Goodland UMC of Goodland, Kansas said. "This will mean we will have to be more strategic with the employment of our time, our finances, and our energy....We now have an opportunity to see the current context as a chance to be more effective at making disciples for Jesus Christ and transforming the world."

"GCFA is constantly monitoring all economic indicators," said Bishop Lindsey Davis, president of the Council. "Indicators show us that the current connectional giving is still strong through 2008. 2009 will

present significant challenges, but our boards and agencies are prepared to make any necessary adjustments. Our thanks to the faithful members of The United Methodist Church who continue to give generously."

"Hope is always a primary focus for persons of faith in times of crisis," said A. Moses Rathan Kumar, General Secretary and Treasurer of GCFA. "Our pulpits and pews are filled every Sunday with messages to 'maintain hope' during a time that is seeing the greatest volatility in the US markets in recent decades."

In a statement issued following the meeting, the committee noted, "These challenges are similar to those our churches faced in past recessions. During the challenging times ahead, many will turn to our churches for additional comfort and peace. It is important that in these times the Church remains ever present to those in need of support. We believe these times of uncertainty represent new opportunities for the mission and ministry of our churches."

## BIRTHS

Elizabeth (Libby) Simone Muscle was born to Liz Roberts (Raleigh: Windborne) and husband, Aaron Muscle, on Nov. 21.

Riley William New was born to Edward (Raleigh: Wakefield) and Judi New (RA: Wakefield associate) on Nov. 21.

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## Church Mice



Karl Zorowski

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Donations from United Methodist congregations, organizations and individuals around the world have made possible the distribution of insecticide-treated bed nets to keep millions of children in Africa safe from malaria. The Nothing but Nets campaign has raised more than \$23 million and distributed more than 2 million nets across Africa. The church's Texas Annual (regional) Conference alone raised more than \$1 million for Nothing But Nets and helped distribute some 855,000 nets free of charge during a health campaign in 18 health districts in Côte d'Ivoire. The Nov. 11-15 campaign included nationwide free vaccinations against measles, de-worming tablets and doses of vitamin A to strengthen immune systems.

## Malaria initiatives join for first time in Côte d'Ivoire outreach

By Tim Tanton \*

The distribution of nearly a million mosquito nets in the West African country of Côte d'Ivoire represents the first collaboration of two anti-malaria programs supported by United Methodists.

Staff with the Nothing But Nets campaign and the United Methodist Committee on Relief's Malaria Control Program worked together for several months, along with other key partners, in planning the November distribution of insecticide-treated bed nets to families in Côte d'Ivoire.

"We're hoping that this campaign here, in Côte d'Ivoire, will be a model for future campaigns to really leverage the expertise of faith-based groups, in particular The United Methodist Church," said Adrianna Logalbo, director of the Nothing But Nets Campaign at the United Nations Foundation.

"We've all brought something very different to the table," said Melissa Crutchfield, staff executive for international disaster response with UMCOR.

The nets were purchased through Nothing But Nets, and UMCOR helped train the volunteers who distributed them. UMCOR is a unit of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries. Nothing But Nets is promoted in the church by the Global Health Initiative, housed at United Methodist Communications.

"In many instances, we face problems of magnitude that are beyond the scope of any one organization, even the church," said the Rev. Larry

Hollon, top staff executive of United Methodist Communications. "The work in Côte d'Ivoire illustrates how partnerships that combine the strengths and skills of many partners can achieve a scale that benefits hundreds, if not thousands of people."

### Education is important

Other partners in the nets campaign included the U.N. Foundation and the denomination's Côte d'Ivoire and Texas annual conferences. The outreach was part of an integrated health campaign involving other partners, and it included providing measles vaccinations, de-worming tablets and doses of vitamin A to Ivoirian children between the ages of 9 months and 59 months.

Behind the scenes, UMCOR's Malaria Control Program paid for a training of 800 Ivoirian volunteers, comprising United Methodists from Côte d'Ivoire and community educators appointed by the Ivoirian Ministry of Health, and provided information to a 35-member delegation of Texas Conference volunteers.

Shannon Trilli, staff executive for project implementation with the Board of Global Ministries, emphasized the importance of educating people on the correct use of nets and training local volunteers. "Educating and preventing the disease rather than treating it once a young child or pregnant woman is infected is a more powerful strategy in our church's fight to eliminate malaria," she said.

\*Tim Tanton is director of the Media Group at United Methodist Communications.

## Reflections from 2008 General Conference

During the denomination's top legislative gathering last spring, United Methodists vowed the church and its congregations would nurture the poor, sick and lost across the globe.

- ♦ The 2008 General Conference met for 10 days in Fort Worth, TX, and delegates voted to focus on engaging in ministry with the poor; creating new places for new people and renewing existing congregations; stamping out diseases of poverty by improving health globally; and developing principled Christian leaders for the church and the world.
- ♦ In a conference more focused on the world outside the U.S. than in previous years, the keynote address was delivered by Ellen Johnson Sirleaf who is a United Methodist and serves as president of Liberia. She is the first female president of an African nation. The Hope for Africa Children's Choir of Uganda, made up mostly of children from displaced persons' camps, brought delegates to their feet with energetic singing and dancing.
- ♦ The United Methodist Church in Côte d'Ivoire, the largest regional conference of the worldwide denomination with almost 700,000 members, received its full rights and responsibilities.
- ♦ The worldwide assembly also approved a \$642 million budget for the next four years, created a hymnal revision committee and generally retained the church's stances on homosexuality.
- ♦ The NC Conference delegates, pictured below, were active in their leadership during General Conference.



## Grant deadline from page 3

or project. Applications will be evaluated at the March meeting of GBCS's Board of Directors.

For assistance completing the form, call Donna Brandyberry, (202) 488-5641, or send her an e-mail at dbrandyberry@umc-gbcs.org. For more information or to request an application form, contact Mark Harrison, GBCS director of Peace with Justice, (202) 488-5645, or via e-mail to mharrison@umc-gbcs.org.

GBCS is one of four international general program boards of The United Methodist Church.

The board's primary areas of ministry are Advocacy, Education and Leadership Formation, United Nations and International Affairs, and resourcing these areas for the denomination.

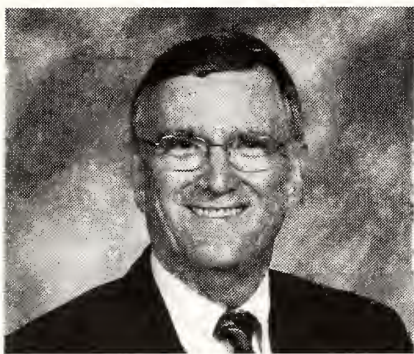
It has offices in Washington, D.C., and at the Church Center at the United Nations in New York City.

## DEATHS

**EPPS, Pat Windley**, widow of the Rev. Ralph Epps, died Nov. 23. Funeral services were held Nov. 26 at Edenton UMC.

**COLLINS, Delton** (Triad Native American UMC: Greensboro with charge conference at Rockingham: Collins Chapel UMC) died Dec. 7. The funeral was held Dec. 11 at Prospect UMC in Maxton.





By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

## February 1, 2009

Text: 2 Kings 4:8-17

### "A Shumanite Woman Helps"

Although the Bible often shows people of wealth and power to be greedy and self-serving (think of Pharaoh, Herod, Jesus' story of the man who built barns to store grain he didn't need), this week's lesson tells of a woman of considerable position who is kind and generous.

In our appropriate enthusiasm for recognizing that God cares deeply for the poor and dispossessed, we sometimes forget that God also cares for those who have money and who have comfort. Indeed it is hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom (Matthew 19:23), but don't forget the rest of what Jesus said in that teaching: "...but for God all things are possible."

# February <sup>adult</sup> BIBLE STUDY

Based on the scripture lessons of Cokesbury's Adult Bible Studies series.

The Shumanite woman reminds us that kingdom qualities are not defined by income. Truth to tell, there are temptations to abuse power, to flaunt wealth, and to be self-satisfied, but here is evidence that it does not have to be that way! There are persons of all places of status who open themselves to God's gifts of justice, sharing, and kindness.

Another thing I note in this text is the emotional response of the Shumanite woman when Elisha told her that she would have a son (2 Kings 4:16). Often, we forget that persons who seem "to have it all" are still persons with feelings, disappointments, challenges, and hidden hurts. In this story, the woman of wealth shows great inner stress and feeling (4:16).

One more thing: the Shumanite woman has been generous to Elisha long before she recognizes that he is a man of God (4:8). She was not hospitable to the prophet just so she could receive divine favor. She was welcom-

ing because she simply wanted to help a traveler. Talk about entertaining angels unawares (Hebrews 13:2)! Her motivation was not to curry favor with God; her impulse was from a spirit of grace.

### What Someone Else Has Said:

In a book edited by Richard Heitzenrater (*The Poor and the People Called Methodists*, Kingswood Books), S T Kimbrough, Jr. has quoted the observation of James Charlesworth: "Recent...studies indicate that Jesus attracted all segments of society. I cannot find one of His Twelve who was poor. James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were well-to-do if not wealthy. Judas certainly was not one of the poor...Peter and Matthew were probably moderately wealthy. Jesus came to speak to the needs of all, whether they were poor or wealthy."

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of us all, open my eyes to see Your good presence in all kinds of people. Tear away the preconditions I put on those who are not like me..."

## February 8, 2009

Text: 2 Samuel 12:1-7, 13-15

### "Nathan Challenges David"

Nathan was an advisor to King David. Nathan knew the shabby story of how David had broken a host of ethical boundaries with violations including adultery and the moral equivalent of murder (2 Samuel 11). No wonder our study text begins: "But the thing that David had done displeased God" (2 Samuel 12:1).

The New English Bible says: "But what David had done was wrong in the eyes of the Lord." The Contemporary English Version says: "The Lord was angry at what David had done." Wrong! Displeased! Angry! Those are strong words, but who has the nerve to say that to King David?

Enter Nathan. The name "Nathan" means "gift" and his courage and conviction were surely a spiritual gift to David. Of course, Nathan decides on a back door approach. He tells a story that stirs David's emotions.

If Nathan had initially offered an "in your face" confrontation, David's defenses would have been so high that the king would not have heard the truth. (Questions for further reflection: Can "unvarnished" truth get in the way of other persons' actually hearing the truth? What is the

difference between sugar coating the truth and revealing the truth?)

Nathan does more than pronounce God's anger. He also announces God's forgiveness (2 Samuel 12:13). (Sometimes we are so pleased to find a sin in someone else that we have little room for receiving their confession or understanding that God forgives.)

The word translated "put away" ("the Lord has put away your sin") can depict almost any kind of circumstance of transition. Maybe a loose translation might be: "The Lord has moved on from your sin."

But there is a ripple effect even of sin for which we repent. The son of David and Bathsheba dies (2 Samuel 12:18). Was the child's death because David had sinned? Nathan seems to think so (2 Samuel 12:14). More than some general biblical statement about why children get ill and die (See John 9:1-3 for Jesus' comment), this verse is one more reminder to David that ultimately David is not in charge of life and death. God is and it is a providence we can trust.

### What Someone Else Has Said:

In Marilynne Robinson's novel *Home* (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux), one preacher is described this way: "He did mention sin, but it was rarefied in his understanding of it, a matter of acts and omissions so commonplace that no one could be wholly innocent of them, or especially alarmed by them."

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of David and God of this generation, open our hearts to word of our own sin and move with such grace that we hear, accept, and live out your forgiveness..."

## February 15, 2009

Text: Esther 4:1-3, 9-17

### "Esther Risks Her Life"

The Book of Esther would make a great television series. It has palace intrigue. It has romantic interests. It has a beauty contest. It has lavish banquet scenes. ("Food Network," eat your heart out!) It has religious drama. It has a range of heroes, heroines, and villains. It does seem to be lacking a major sporting event, but, otherwise, to flip through the Book of Esther is like channel surfing with the TV remote.

The study texts pluck out a portion

## Springtime By The Sea



### All Creatures Great and Small An Event for Older Adults

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- \*See a Raptor Flight demonstration: Birds of Prey, Georgia Southern University Raptor Center



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# February adult Bible study *continued from page 12*

of the story: Esther's risk of life and limb in order to help her people. In a sense, it is the kind of danger that often comes to minority populations who seek to declare their rights.

In the story, the king stands for those who are in charge of society. In the story, Esther stands for those who call for justice and balance. Those role (places of power and people wanting freedom) do not always mix!

Esther recognizes the threat in which she puts herself. (Anyone who approaches the king without invitation is to be put to death.) "If I perish, I perish," she says rather matter-of-factly (Esther 4:16).

It interests me that in Hebrew, the word translated "perish" is a word that means something one does to oneself (for example, the same word can be translated "wander away"). Even though it would be the king who orders her execution, Esther knows she has done it to herself. In other words, one might translate: "If I choose to perish, I choose to perish." In a subtle way, it is a claim that even though the king can have me put to death, such a death is of my own decision. That is strong stuff!

I am reminded of the attitude of many of those who violated racial

segregation laws in the early days of the civil rights movement. They did so with no expectation of being excused from breaking the law.

The United Methodist Social Principles say that those who engage in civil disobedience should be willing to accept the costs of disobedience.

Although there is no record that Esther was a United Methodist, she would have agreed with that standard!

In this strange Book of Esther, perhaps best known as a biblical book that does not mention God, there is a reminder to us in the community of faith: we never know when it will be our time to take a stand against power, when it will be our time to go to bat for oppressed people, when it will be our time to risk for what (and Who) is right.

## What Someone Else Has Said:

Ross Snyder (*Young People and Their Culture*, Abingdon Press) wrote: "We were meant to be an aliveness. Meant to insert our lives where the action is going on...We are built for risk—not just to have kicks, but 'for the sake of' and 'in the name of.'"

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Am I Esther, Lord?..."

## UMCOR helps refugees from page 6

lies. Others face deportation pending upcoming court trials.

Although some work permits have been granted, jobs and resources are scarce. UMCOR will support the Postville Central Coordinating Committee in coordinating crisis services and case management work to help these families in need. Support this effort by giving to Domestic Disaster Response, UMCOR Advance #901670.

## Kenya: Promoting Peace

More than 4,000 women in the Nakuru camp for displaced persons in Kenya are confronting the violence that eroded during last year's elections through a movement of peace.

In a partnership with Nakuru UMC, a women's group has formed to promote harmony. The group held a "We Can End Violence Cup Tournament," where four women's soccer teams competed. The event engaged women, youth and men in peace-building discussions.

"We chose to rise up against all odds, and vowed to promote peace in our country, because violence was threatening to completely destroy the humble life we were leading," said Jane Anyango, the chairperson of the group.

UMCOR is enabling the Nakuru camp to provide 24-hour medical care to over 26,000 displaced people and provide school uniforms and books to over 2,500 orphans now enrolled in school. Support the work in Kenya by giving to International Disaster Response, UMCOR Advance #982450.

Make contributions through local churches or mail checks to UMCOR, P.O. Box 9068, New York, NY 10087. For credit card donations, visit UMCOR's Web site at [www.umcor.org](http://www.umcor.org) or call (800) 554-8583.

## Let's Journey To...

### Israel/Palestine June 29 - July 9, 2009

*It is time to return to the Land of the Bible. Remember your baptism at the Jordan River, renew your spiritual relationship at the Sea of Galilee, recall ancient history on the shore of the Dead Sea, walk the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem and kneel in Bethlehem. Register Early & Save. Space is limited ~ Call today for more information.*

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## February 22, 2009

**Text: Isaiah 6:1-8**

### "Isaiah Answers God's Call"

When I was in seminary—uh, a few years ago—I was taught that worship should follow the flow of this text, Isaiah 6:1-8. The pattern was: (1) Praise of God—Isaiah 6:1-3; (2) Confession of Sin—Isaiah 6:5; (3) Pardon of Sin—Isaiah 6:7; (4) Proclamation of the Word and Invitation—Isaiah 6:8a; and (5) Commitment to Discipleship—Isaiah 6:8.

Although the prophet was not writing a theological textbook, he certainly touched the heart of our theological understanding of a relationship with God, to be experienced in worship and in service. (We do still call it "a worship service," don't we?)

The "come and go" nature of worship is clear in this passage. Isaiah is called apart to a place, the temple. Place is important. Designated place is important. To go apart from the rush of life is important.

But the door to the temple swings both ways! Just as Isaiah goes into the temple, Isaiah is invited to leave the temple "to go." Here is the rhythm of steeple and street, of pew and pavement, of worship and world.

To stay permanently in a "temple mode" is less than that to which God calls us. To stay permanently in a "traffic mode" is less than that to which God calls us. We are called both to temple and to traffic.

As the folk saying goes: "Some people are so heavenly minded that they are no earthly good." And, I suppose, the opposite can be said: "Some people are so earthly minded, that

they are no heavenly good." Jesus said we should pray for the kingdom to come on earth as in heaven. There is a connection between the two!

Jerome (who lived in the fourth and fifth century) made an interesting observation about Isaiah's protestation that "I am a man of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5). Jerome says this confession is not because of something Isaiah has said; but, quite the contrary, it is because Isaiah had not spoken up as a prophet should. He had held his tongue, when he should have used it. That is what made his lips unclean!

That is a challenging thought: my sin is not always what I do, but is sometimes what I do not do.

The worship of God is not completed within the temple. It is completed only as Isaiah accepts the call and is willing to be sent wherever God would send him. It does not take much imagination to see what that implies for us!

## What Someone Else Has Said:

Patricia N. Page, an active Episcopal lay person from Durham, has written (*All God's People Are Ministers*, Augsburg Press): "Worship is the act of walking between earth and heaven, the middle ground of the royal priesthood. Our offering to God of ourselves and of all of the created world that our lives have touched is changed, re-created, for us to use as God's gift to the whole of God's world."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Holy, holy, holy..."

## CLASSIFIEDS

**BLACK CASSOCKS** (sleeveless) and white surplices available to any church that could use them. We have 50 wooden chairs from our choir rehearsal room also available. We would like to see them find a home in a church that needs them. Please contact Russell Wilcox at Hayes Barton UMC: 919-832-6435 or email [rwilcox@hbumc.org](mailto:rwilcox@hbumc.org) if interested.

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## Conference on Prophetic Ministry

The North Carolina Chapter of Methodist Federation for Social Action will sponsor the Jack Crum Prophetic Ministry Conference, a one-day conference on Feb. 21 at University UMC in Chapel Hill.

With keynote speaker, Bishop Kenneth Carder and panel and small group discussions, this is planned as a time to become more familiar with needs, opportunities and challenges for local and international ministry and to rekindle a passion to serve all God's people.

The registration fee is \$25. If there are questions, contact Henry Jarrett at 919-606-5674 or jarretth@bellsouth.net. Checks should be made payable to MFSA-NC and mailed to MFSA-NC, c/o Henry Jarrett, P.O. Box 19311, Raleigh, NC 27619.

## Mission Seed Funds Available

Mission Seed Funds are designed to facilitate and encourage United Methodist congregations of the NC Conference in risk-taking ministry and radical hospitality. These funds are meant to be supplemental funding that assists congregations and supported ministries in beginning new ministry that is directed along the Seven Pathways with specific emphasis on moving the congregation into hands-on ministry beyond the walls of the church. Applications are due Feb. 28, 2009 and can be downloaded at [www.nccmission.org/grants&advance.htm](http://www.nccmission.org/grants&advance.htm). For further information call the Missions and Justice Office at 800-849-4433 or 919-832-9560.

## Ethnic Local Church Grants Offered

The deadline is Jan. 10 to apply for an Ethnic Local Church Grant from the United Methodist General Board of Church & Society (GBCS). The grants program is to strengthen ethnic local churches through education, advocacy or leadership training and development as they engage in social justice. For more information and links to download the grant application please go to: [www.umc-gbcs.org](http://www.umc-gbcs.org), click on Leadership Development, then select GBCS Grants on the bottom left of the page.

## January Is Project AGAPE Month

January is a time to reflect on and respond to the deep needs of the people of Armenia. Many in Armenia continue to struggle as refugees in the midst of destroyed houses and broken lives. Armenia remains one of the world's poorest countries, particularly in the disputed territory between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Please continue to pray for the needs of this ministry and consider an offering on a Sunday in January. Bulletin inserts are available on-line as a download at [http://nccmission.org/project\\_agape.htm](http://nccmission.org/project_agape.htm).

## Caring for Creation – Justice for God's Earth and God's Children

"Caring for Creation" coming March 5-8, 2009 at Lake Junaluska, will address how the faith community can promote justice for the Earth and its people. The seminar will provide biblical and theological support for developing opportunities for faith communities to be caretakers of this planet. Participants will attend three of 15 workshops. For details and registration, please see [www.lakejunaluska.com/caring-for-creation.aspx](http://www.lakejunaluska.com/caring-for-creation.aspx).

## Help Seekers Find Local Churches

UM Communications provides a site for persons who are seeking a local United Methodist church. The site, "Find A Church," provides information and directions to the church. Churches are asked to periodically check and update listed information by going [www.umc.org](http://www.umc.org) and selecting "Find A Church" from the top menu bar. A GCFA number is required to make updates. GCFA numbers can be found in the Conference Journal on Table I, II, III reports.

## Participate in MLK Observances

For the 28th consecutive year, the Raleigh/Wake Martin Luther King Celebration Committee is sponsoring a presentation of family-oriented, multi-racial events in observance of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday. The Raleigh/RTP King Holiday observances are free and open to the public. For information on Triangle MLK Celebration events, visit <http://www.king-raleigh.org/events/body.cfm>.

## Construction Project Help Needed at New Hope UMC in Rowland

Come and join in the excitement of building a church and building the Kingdom. Volunteers are needed at New Hope UMC in Rowland for a fellowship hall/family life center construction project. New Hope is situated in a high-risk neighborhood that desperately needs the face of Jesus. Come and assist working each day, Monday-Friday. For details, call or email NC Conference Contractor JP McGuire at: (919) 920-7282 or [jpmcguire@nccumc.org](mailto:jpmcguire@nccumc.org).

## Updated Membership Vows Available

The new baptismal and professing membership vows of The United Methodist Church adopted by delegates to the 2008 General Conference, took effect Jan. 1, 2009. The new vows and ritual are available on the General Board of Discipleship Worship Web site at [http://www.gbod.org/worship/default.asp?act=reader&item\\_id=46866&loc\\_id=9,824](http://www.gbod.org/worship/default.asp?act=reader&item_id=46866&loc_id=9,824). See article on page 1 for more.

### conference CALENDAR

#### January

- 1 UM Building closed for New Year's holiday
- 3 Youth Service Fund Task Force Meeting, 10 am; United Methodist Building
- 7 Stewardship Team, 10 a.m. United Methodist Building
- 10 Conference Council on Youth Ministries Meeting, 10 am; Methodist Building
- 10 UMW Executive Committee Meeting, 9:30am Whitley Memorial UMC, Smithfield
- 18 Human Relations Sunday
- 19 UM Building closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday observance
- 21 Final day for 2008 Apportionment and Advance Special receipts, 8:30 a.m., Treasurer's Office, United Methodist Building
- 30-2/1 PK Getaway; Rockfish

#### Outdoor Center

- 31 Minister's Transition Fund 2008 Contributions Due

#### February

- 6-8 UMW Conference Executive Committee Retreat, Morehead City
- 7 Committee on Refugees and Immigrants Co-Sponsor Educational Event; North Raleigh UMC; 9-11am
- 16 Stewardship Committee; United Methodist Building, 10:30am-1pm
- 21 Youth Lay Speaker Training; 10am - 4pm; United Methodist Building
- 23 Conference Connectional Table; 10am - 4 pm, United Methodist Building
- 27-28 Conference 39 & Under Event, Campground UMC, Fayetteville
- 28 Global Vision Orientation, 11am, UM Building

For more information on upcoming North Carolina Conference events, visit the conference web site at [www.nccumc.org](http://www.nccumc.org) and click on "Calendar."



# Around the CONFERENCE



## Coins for UNICEF — Maysville UMC

The children of Maysville UMC collected for UNICEF. Holding their UNICEF collection boxes are: (L-R) Abbie Marinelli, Alexis Marinelli, Justin Hendrickson, Brianna Hendrickson, Elizabeth Marinelli, Daniel Fisher, and Joseph Fisher.



## "Night in Haiti" — Whitley Memorial UMC

On Sunday, Nov. 2, the United Methodist Women of Whitley Memorial UMC hosted a "Night In Haiti" for the members of the congregation. Darlene Lee, the incoming president for the group presented a slide show of a medical mission to Haiti she participated in, and the members were treated to a taste of several different Haitian dishes afterward. On display were 170 handmade dresses for young Haitian girls, sewn by several of the women of the church. The dresses will be delivered in person by church members Darlene Lee and Ann Collier in January.



## Chrismon Tree — Woodland UMC

At Woodland UMC, the Fellowship of Friends UMW handmade the chrismons, symbolizing the life of Jesus, from gold beads and pearls purchased at the Rufty Chrismon Shop in Salisbury. There are at least 3 ornaments of each chrismon symbol. The crown on the top of the tree is large enough to fit a person's head and was designed by a UMW member. In total, 140+ ornaments were made. The chrismon tree was consecrated during worship on Nov. 30.

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## Turkey Giveaway — Cypress Creek UMC

On Dec. 13, Cypress Creek UMC in the New Bern District held their annual Christmas Turkey Give-a-Way at their small church on Highway 41 west of Trenton. Cypress Creek started this annual event three years ago, and it has grown. To quote Amy Andrews, an organizer of the event, "We have been so blessed that this is a way we can share our blessings with our community." Recipients began lining up an hour before the distribution began, and, in about 15 minutes, this small member church of 50 gave away 200 Christmas turkeys to the less fortunate in Jones County and shared the love of Christ.



## Support Camp Mekokiko in Hawaii

Hawaii District does not currently have camping facilities to support the spiritual formation of leaders and youth. The District is building at Camp Mekokiko, but time is running out for the building permits. They are in a "build it or lose it" bind with the only special use permit available expiring in 2013. Visit the Web site <http://www.mekokiko.com> to read about the 36.5-acre site plan and project information. Gifts can be made through PayPal on the Web site, or by personal check to the Camp Mekokiko Fund Development Office, Post Office Box 1529, Honoka'a, HI 96727. Help in the form of Volunteers in Mission teams are also welcome.



## Submitting Around the Conference Information

Items for consideration in the Around the Conference section can be emailed to [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org). The deadline is the 5th day of the month prior to publication. All articles and photos are subject to editing. Photographs or art should be recorded in the largest size and highest resolution possible. Send in JPEG or TIFF formats. Articles and photos must be sent in separate files; photos cannot be embedded in articles or in photo viewing programs. See page 4 for information on submitting other types of information to the Advocate.

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## Methodist University students excel in the grace of giving



Young students at the school in the Chimborazo Province in Ecuador.

By Yashaswi Shrestha \*

For the second consecutive year, Methodist University students have excelled in the grace of giving. This summer, the Kathryn Wasserman Davis Foundation granted \$10,000 per project for two projects selected from Methodist University.

Four students, Marco Marin (Columbia), Heather Eckhardt (United States), Gladys Michelle Reyes (Honduras), and Cathryn "Cassie" Sinkovitz (United States) supported world peace by organizing projects aimed at educating and promoting self-sustainability among communities in different parts of the world.

### Going Green

At 14,000 feet in the Chimborazo Province in Ecuador—26 hours from his home in Columbia—Marin set up greenhouses designed to educate and sustain three local communities.



Marco and the helpers from the village.

Working with local non-governmental organizations, and students from the University of Marseille, Marin and Eckhardt taught the necessary skills to grow diverse crops and medicinal plants within the shelter of a greenhouse. "I got a chance to live the real experience," Marin said. Sandstorms swept the rugged terrain at more than 100 mph, and the temperature remained below freezing. With the exception of potatoes, the arid and windswept topography of the region does not support food crops.

Under these conditions, Marin and his team established three greenhouses for three communities: Rio Colorado, Cruz Del Arenal, and Guadalupe. The greenhouses had to be built below ground level to prevent damage by the harsh mountainous weather conditions. With adequate maintenance, the greenhouses should last three years. However, their vision for the project stretches far beyond the construction of the greenhouses.

To raise environmental awareness, Marin and his team also published a book for the local school children. The book contains information about the construction of greenhouses, and the long-term benefits they have on agricultural produce and variety. By the end of the summer, Marin and Eckhardt had educated the community about available resources and provided the required tools and skills that would make life better for the local people.

### "A Call for Help"

Reyes and Sinkovitz traveled to the swampy wetlands of northeastern Honduras. In the poverty-stricken coastal area of Mosquitia, both students worked to relieve the local people of diseases and illnesses caused by unhygienic lifestyles. Together, they organized the project called "A Call for Help."



Students at the school in La Mosquitia, Honduras.

Marshy conditions make the area a breeding ground for various waterborne diseases. In a community surviving without resources such as electricity, drinkable water, and hygienic toilet facilities, Reyes, Sinkovitz, and their team felt the need to promote health awareness.

Their focus was to educate villagers about common diseases like malaria and other illnesses caused by parasites. They worked in unison with a team of doctors, nurses, and teachers to distribute medical supplies and educate the youth about good health and hygiene.

In addition, the team distributed free academic materials to the students and provided clothing for people in the community. "In the end, they were treating us like a part of their family," Reyes said.

Their efforts impacted the lives of over 900 local people who were cured or relieved of sickness. The team continued their project by conducting workshops in health and sex education, sanitation, and personal development. Marin, who is majoring in global studies, says, "I believe that helping is not about giving everything, but about providing the right tools for development."

\* Yashaswi Shrestha is a student at Methodist University, Fayetteville.



The UM Committee on Relief (UMCOR) launched a multi-pronged plan to respond to the dire humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe.

"We are so pleased to...bring substantial assistance to our sisters and brothers in Zimbabwe," said the Rev. Sam Dixon, UMCOR's top executive and NC Conference elder, of the relief agency's latest efforts.

A severe food shortage and cholera epidemic, combined with the world's highest inflation rate of more than 2 million percent, has created an immense humanitarian crisis.

Working with the NC Conference-based program, ZOE Ministry ([www.zoeministry.org](http://www.zoeministry.org)), an immediate distribution of food and additional support for UM hospitals will help alleviate the suffering of thousands of people. Providing clean water in Nyadire and additional long-term projects are part of UMCOR's future plans in the African nation.

The food delivery began the week of Dec. 15 and will go to all 12 United Methodist districts in Zimbabwe—reaching more than 1,200 households and 11,000 primary school students. The grain will provide each

person with an additional meal for 65 days. This is much-needed relief in an economy where a loaf of bread can cost half of one's monthly salary.

While the country's largest hospitals are closing in the midst of a growing cholera epidemic, United Methodist institutions are keeping their doors open to treat those in need regardless of their ability to pay.

UMCOR is shoring up UM hospitals to better cope with the worsening health situation and the cholera crisis in particular. Special cholera kits are en route to allow the hospitals to effectively treat those sick with the treatable but deadly illness.

UMCOR asks that financial gifts be sent to Zimbabwe Emergency, Advance #199456, to support its general response. Gifts to Hospital Revitalization, Advance #982168, support UM hospitals.

Make contributions through local churches or mail checks to UMCOR, P.O. Box 9068, New York, NY 10087. Write the Advance name and number on the check memo line. For credit card donations, visit UMCOR's Web site at [www.umcor.org](http://www.umcor.org) or call (800) 554-8583.

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Celebrating Black History Month  
Pages 7-10

Volume 154 / Number 2

February 2009



One hundred thirteen men attended an event at St. James, Greenville, exploring how men can leave a legacy of faith, hope, and love to family members through the lost art of letter-writing.

## St. James-Greenville inspires men through "Letters From Dad" event

By Rick Hebert \*

"If God were to take you home today ... what would your wife and children hold in their hands tomorrow that would let them know that they were the treasures of your life?"

This is the question asked by the Letters From Dad program. The answer is to join a journey with other men to leave a legacy of faith, hope, and love to family members through the lost art of letter-writing.

Malachi 4:6 is the scriptural focus for the Letters From Dad program where God speaks of "turning the hearts of fathers to the children, and the hearts of children to their fathers."

The men's ministry of St. James UMC-Greenville kicked off this program on Jan. 11. Greg Vaughn, founder of Letters From Dad, preached during the morning worship services and also spoke at an evening dinner event.

One hundred thirteen men attended the evening event, which featured participants wearing the colors of their favorite college or professional

sports teams. Vaughn spoke of the tremendous positive effects on relationships that occur as men learn to express words of love and blessing to their families.

Over 76 men signed up to participate in a letter-writing course which will meet monthly for four months. Participants will learn to write letters of love and blessing to their wives, children, grandchildren, and parents. Attendees will also write a special "legacy" letter for future generations.

Letters From Dad is an official ministry partner of the General Commission on United Methodist Men ([www.gcumm.org](http://www.gcumm.org)). It is now being used in over 1,000 churches across the nation.

For further information, go to [www.letters-fromdad.com](http://www.letters-fromdad.com) where an introductory information package can be ordered. The Revs. Johnny Branch and Dennis Adams serve as the pastors at St. James UMC.

\* Rick Hebert is a member of the Men of Purpose Leadership Team at St. James UMC.

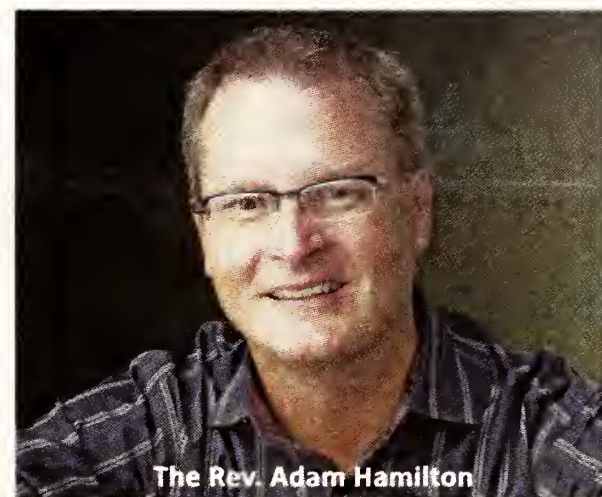
## Hamilton to teach at Annual Conference

By Bill Norton \*

The Rev. Adam Hamilton, founding pastor of one of the most respected churches in the denomination, will present three teaching sessions on Friday, June 12 during the meeting of the North Carolina Annual Conference in Greenville. Hamilton's overall topic is "Leading Beyond the Walls."

Annual Conference will be held June 10-13 in the Greenville Convention Center. Schedule adjustments are expected to be made by the Conference Program Planning Committee for the teaching sessions.

See "Annual Conference," page 4



The Rev. Adam Hamilton

## Apportionments at 93.01%

Congratulations to all churches for a 93.01% pay out rate on the 2008 apportionment year. The figure for 2007 was 94.57%.

"Congregations and pastors should be commended for their faithful response to this connectional, missional giving," said Christine Dodson, conference treasurer. "In addition, celebration should be extended to the Elizabeth City District in reaching 100% support of the Episcopal Fund and to local church members for their support of this first mile giving."

"We are also excited that the Conference Council on Finance and Administration was able to approve a budget supplement to allow the Conference to pay the General and Jurisdictional apportionments in full for 2008," Dodson said. This is the fourth year in a row that the North Carolina Conference has paid 100% of connectional apportionments.

"This supplemental funding from the Council allows the North Carolina Conference to fulfill its portion of the support of our general and jurisdictional agencies within our connectional covenant," Dodson said.

"With the economic struggles facing our nation and the world today, we continue to give God thanks for all the many ways in which we are blessed and for the opportunities we have that allow us to return these blessings to support His kingdom."

## Academy names Gentle interim executive director

By Shannon O. Williams \*

Dr. Brian Gentle will lead the Academy for Leadership Excellence as interim executive director.

"Dr. Gentle brings decades of hands-on experience as a member of the clergy, a community volunteer, and a teacher," said Academy Board Chair Larry Coats. "He is uniquely qualified to help the Academy execute its mission."



Dr. Brian Gentle

A graduate of Yale Divinity School, Gentle received a master of arts from Columbia and a doctorate of philosophy from Duke University.

See "Academy," page 5

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# Churches reaching out to the community

## Third outreach project held by Pine Valley

By Trish Archer \*

It started two years ago as a simple idea of one Pine Valley UMC family. "Let's feed people in the local recovery half-way houses that don't have anywhere to go for Christmas Eve," thought the Hale family.

They told a few people, and very quickly an idea developed into a plan that developed into outreach feeding 300 people the first year.

Food was delivered to local shelters and the community joined Pine Valley's first-ever Christmas Eve dinner. Not only were people fed, but care packages were also



Dana Brigman brought her children to make gift bags for other children to help them learn about generosity.



Inviting people in recovery programs and half-way houses, the Pine Valley UMC congregation fed 1,025 at their third Christmas Eve outreach dinner. Food was delivered to local shelters and on a downtown Wilmington street corner, and blankets and children's gift bags were distributed.

delivered to a nursing home to reach folks who otherwise might be forgotten on Christmas Eve.

Why do this? The simple answer: "Because Jesus said to do it," said Amanda Hale. Ten-year old Haley Bolduc said that she participates because she "wants people to have a nice dinner and have people to eat with instead of being alone on Christmas Eve."

In 2007, the second annual Christmas Eve dinner was held, food delivery was arranged for the shelters,

and items were collected for care packages. An estimated 600 people were touched as people reached into the community.

For 2008, the numbers grew to 1,025 people fed on Christmas Eve. Food was again delivered to the local shelters, dinner was served after the 6pm worship service, and leftovers were boxed up and distributed on a street corner in a downtown Wilmington neighborhood.

Toys, art supplies, and other items were collected and distributed in gift

bags to children in the shelters as well as the children of the dinner guests. Blankets were collected and distributed to people in need of warmth.

The Christmas Eve Outreach at Pine Valley drew people of all ages together for one purpose: to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world, responding to a simple God-given idea.

\* The Rev. Trish Archer is Associate Pastor at Pine Valley UMC, Wilmington.

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For further information contact Henry Jarrett at 919-606-5674 or jarretth@bellsouth.net. To register, make check out to MFSA NC and mail to: NC c/o Henry Jarrett  
PO Box 18311, Raleigh, NC 27619-8311.

Let us know if you have special dietary needs.



Food donations collected by the UMW will be sent home in the backpacks of children who otherwise might not have food to eat on the weekends.

## UMW at Mt. Moriah UMC launches program to help food-insecure children in Sampson County

The United Methodist Women of Mt. Moriah UMC in the Fayetteville District recently learned through the District UMW of a need facing children in their own community. They responded by launching a new program to assist youth in the Sampson County school system who are food insecure. The program helps supply food to the children by collecting and packaging instant food products to be sent home from school with the children. These children receive breakfast and lunch at the school but may not have food during the weekends. By packaging instant food products and sending them home in the children's backpacks, the children are able to have at least some sustenance until they return to school. Each package offers two days' worth of food and consists of items such as peanut butter, soup, and juice that can be prepared by the children. The school system has identified the needs, and Mt. Moriah UMC is planning to continue supporting this program as a way to reach and care for the children in their community who are in need.



# UM pastor, Joseph Lowery, offers inaugural benediction

By Linda Bloom \*

Two United Methodist veterans of the civil rights movement shared the inaugural platform on Jan. 20 when Barack Obama was sworn in as the 44th president of the United States.

The Rev. Joseph Lowery, 87, gave the benediction after President Obama's inaugural address.

Dorothy Height, 96, was also among the special guests.

Both had worked alongside the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., whose birthday was celebrated a day earlier.

Lowery told National Public Radio on Jan. 19 that he was a bit unnerved by the thought that millions would be listening to his closing prayer. "Every time I think about what I'm going to say, I get a little stage fright," he admitted to Michele Norris. But he added that he had been praying for strength from God.

No stage fright was evident after the new president's address, as Lowery began his prayer reciting from the hymn, "Lift Every Voice and Sing," which is No. 519 in the *United Methodist Hymnal*. "We truly

give thanks for the glorious experience that we shared this day," Lowery prayed.

Noting that God will work "through faithful leadership" to restore the nation's stability, mend wounds and tend to the poor, Lowery called upon Americans to "come into the spirit of unity and solidarity to commit our support of our president."

"Help us to make choices on the side of love, not hate, on the side of inclusion, not exclusion, tolerance, not intolerance," he

prayed.

Lowery put on his preaching hat as he concluded the prayer, asking that "all those who do justice and love mercy, say Amen." The "amens" were repeated several times.

In a Jan. 19 essay written for the *Chicago Tribune*, Lowery said that, during the oath of office, he would look down the National Mall and in his mind's eye "see a 34-year-old preacher standing before a crowd of nearly a quarter of a million at that Lincoln Memorial in 1963, calling on Americans to move beyond the color of their skin to the content of their character. Obama's inauguration is a

nation's response to that call."

## Worked with King

Lowery co-founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference with King in 1957 and served as its president and chief executive officer for 20 years, beginning in 1977.

King named him chair of the

delegation to take demands of the Selma-to-Montgomery March in 1965 to Alabama Gov. George Wallace. Wallace had ordered the marchers beaten—an episode that became known as "Bloody Sunday"—but apologized to Lowery in 1995 as

See "Inauguration," page 11



Rev. Joseph Lowery

## Sermons, orations relating to Obama's inauguration sought

The Library of Congress will be collecting audio and video recordings of sermons and orations delivered during Inauguration Week 2009 that comment on the significance of the event.

As the first African-American president takes office, congregations and groups interested in contributing to this documentary project are asked to donate recordings of sermons and orations delivered to congregations and other audiences between Friday, Jan. 16 and Sunday, Jan. 25, 2009. After archival processing, the collection will be available to scholars and the general public. In addition to audio and video recordings, the Library is collecting written texts of sermons and orations and printed programs from the events during which the sermons and orations were delivered.

All submissions must be postmarked by Feb. 27, 2009, and must be accompanied by a signed release form and completed data form.

For additional information about the Inauguration 2009 Sermons and Orations Project, including the technical specifications of the recordings that can be accepted, release forms, and instructions for submitting collections, visit the Web site [www.loc.gov/folklife/inaugural/](http://www.loc.gov/folklife/inaugural/), or call (202) 707-5510 between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday to Friday.

## Young clergy number rises

By Linda Green \*

For the first time this century, the number of United Methodist clergy under age 35 has surpassed 5 percent, a sign of the emergence of new ways of engaging young adults in church leadership.

In 2008, the number of young elders increased from 876 to 910, and the percentage grew from 4.92 to 5.21 percent. The increase is "modest good news" for the church, said the Rev. Lovett Weems, coauthor of an updated study, "Clergy Age Trends in The United Methodist Church from 1985-2008."

Weems and the Lewis Center for Church Leadership released the original study in 2006. The number of clergy under 35 fell from 3,219 in 1985 to 876 in 2007, but it increased in 2008, according to the study.

"It is encouraging to see an increase over the last few years and to know that many people—including young adults—are working to keep this trend going," said the Rev. Meg Lassiat, who works with young adult pastors and those exploring ministry vocations at the UM Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

The increase in young adult clergy is one indication that many groups are focusing on this issue and finding new ways to engage young adults, she said. Additionally, "we are seeing a growing interest with young people in answering a call to Christian vocation," she said.

The need for the Church to invite, train and retain young adult clergy leaders is one of the most important issues today, Lassiat said. Low percentages of young adults clergy are problematic in "all of the mainline denominations," she said.

### 'It's not enough'

Shalom Agtarap, 25, who is working toward ordained ministry, is thrilled that the number of her peers entering ministry is increasing. "But it's not enough," she said. "Sadly, the few tenths of a percent increase pales in comparison to the percentage of clergy retiring or leaving our church."

There are not more clergy under 35 in the church "because it is not attractive to us," said Teresa Cook, associate pastor of Pine Valley UMC in Wilmington. At 27, she rarely

See "Young adult clergy," page 11

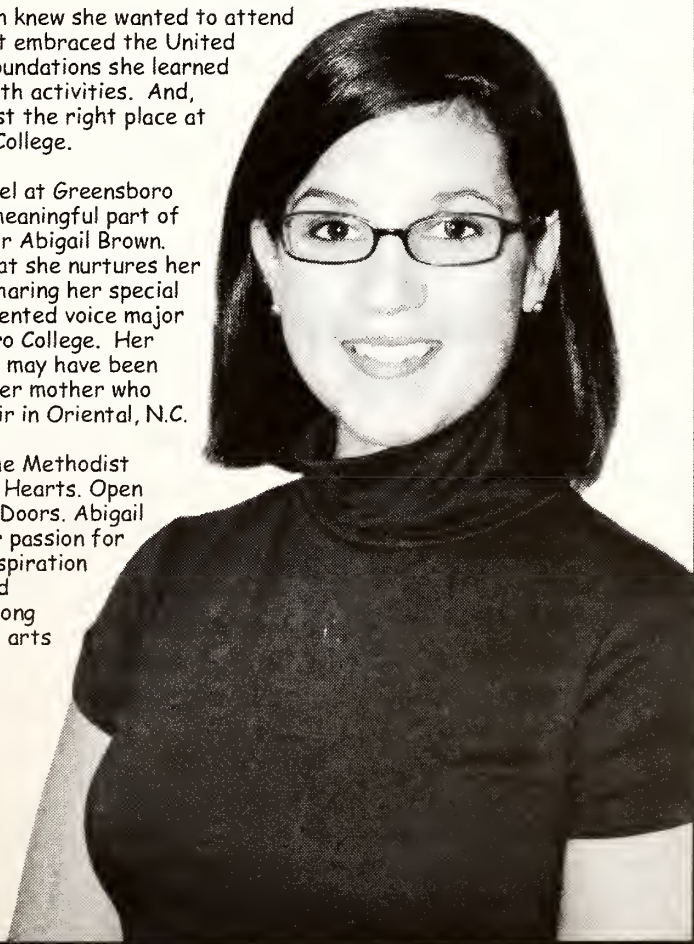
# Abigail

Hometown: Oriental, N.C.

Abigail Brown knew she wanted to attend a college that embraced the United Methodist foundations she learned from her youth activities. And, she found just the right place at Greensboro College.

Weekly Chapel at Greensboro College is a meaningful part of each week for Abigail Brown. It is here that she nurtures her faith while sharing her special gifts as a talented voice major at Greensboro College. Her love of music may have been inspired by her mother who directed choir in Oriental, N.C.

Embracing the Methodist theme, Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors. Abigail combines her passion for music, the inspiration of church and fellowship, along with a liberal arts education.



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# Fruitful Congregations explored at Congress on Evangelism

Missouri Area Bishop Robert Schnase was the featured speaker and workshop leader at the Jan. 6-9 Congress on Evangelism in Nashville, Tenn. Schnase is the author of *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*.

As he explored writing a book on congregational effectiveness, Schnase focused on finding the right word to describe the practical and theological nature of a successful congregation.

"We need a word that captures the essence of the Great Commission and the teachings of early Christians. To me, 'fruitful' is that word. 'Fruitful' is a word that shows action. It stretches us. And as a church, we are called to act and to stretch ourselves."

The practices at the core of Schnase's work are:

1. Radical hospitality;
2. Passionate worship;
3. Intentional faith development;
4. Risk-taking mission and service;
5. Extravagant generosity.

Each of the practices, Schnase said, is designed to stretch everyone's imagination and focus them on ministry in Jesus' mode.

"These core practices are fundamental activities," Schnase told the nearly 1,000 conference participants. "We've got to do it right because it matters....We've got to practice these in exemplary ways." The practices move the church into alignment with Jesus' ministry, he said.

The biannual congress is sponsored by the Foundation for Evangelism and the United Methodist Board of Discipleship.



What happens when Jesus, country music, revival preaching, and leadership training are combined? The January 2009 Congress on Evangelism in Nashville, TN happens! In the photo above are NC Conference leaders who attended the Congress. The event included presentations from Tyrone Gordon, Mike Slaughter, Maxie Dunnam, Bishop Robert Schnase, and Terry Teykl.

## Annual Conference updates, Hamilton to speak *Continued from page 1*

"We are considering moving the Board of Pension Luncheon and the Retiree Recognition Service from Friday to Thursday," said James L. Bryan, conference secretary. "This would permit Hamilton's first presentation to begin at 1 p.m. on Friday."

Preliminary plans call for Hamilton to teach from 1-2:20 p.m. on Effective Church Leadership, 3-4:20 p.m. on Preaching and Worship, and 7-8:20 p.m. on Strategies for Reaching the Unchurched.

### Hamilton's leadership

Hamilton is pastor of The United Methodist Church of the Resurrec-

tion in Leawood, KS. The church grew from four people in 1990 to over 12,000 adult members with an average weekly worship attendance of 7,500 in 2006.

The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection was listed as the most influential mainline church in America in a 2005 survey of American pastors. The Church of the Resurrection has a three-fold focus:

1. Reaching non-religious and nominally religious people and helping them be committed followers of Jesus Christ;
2. Equipping and inspiring members to live their faith in mission to the community and world; and

3. Acting as a catalyst for renewing the mainline church.

Hamilton lectures on leadership, evangelism and preaching across the country. *Religion and Ethics News-weekly* named him one of the "Ten People to Watch in America's Spiritual Landscape."

He is the author of eight books and five small group study kits.

The sessions with Hamilton, made possible by the Board of Laity, are open to conference members and others as seating permits.

### Reports and mailings

In other changes from past conferences, Bryan said only items that require action at the conference will be printed and provided to conference members. The cost of printing was cited as the reason for the change. Mailings to conference members cost almost \$10,000 last year.

"We will have these documents at the various district Annual Conference Orientation Sessions and a few

copies will be available during registration at conference," Bryan said. "In addition, all reports and items of information will be placed on the conference Web site for anyone to read. Printed copies of these reports will not be provided. A conference member can easily go to the Web site and print any and all documents."

The conference Web site, [www.nccumc.org](http://www.nccumc.org), will have any additions and updates of information for conference members. Once on [www.nccumc.org](http://www.nccumc.org), click on "Annual Conference 2009" under Ministry Tools.

Annual Conference information was available on the Web site in previous years. "The items included on the site will be expanded this year. All information about the Annual Conference will be accessible from the Internet but only items requiring votes will be printed," Bryan said.

There are 32 constitutional amendments that require conference vote. In addition to being printed, they are available from [www.nccumc.org](http://www.nccumc.org).

A recommendation to hold the next conference in Greenville will also be presented for action during the conference.

Request forms for conference member housing on the campus of East Carolina University will be mailed April 1. The forms will also be on the Internet.

There is a possibility the Clergy Executive Session will be held at another location not far from the convention center.

"This possible change is being considered to provide more space for the clergy session as well as the laity session which would remain in the Convention Center," Bryan said.

\* Bill Norton is conference director of communications and NCCC Advocate editor.



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### Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

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Submission deadline is the 5th day of the month before publication. All articles and photos subject to editing. Photographs or art should be submitted at 300dpi or higher in JPG or TIF formats.

**Contact:** [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org) or (919) 832-9560 with any questions.

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Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org).

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# New Hope UMC begins year-long celebration of 200th anniversary

By Patricia Walker Murphy \*

On Saturday, Jan. 3, parishioners of New Hope UMC in Hertford began a year-long 200th anniversary celebration.

"That's the only way to celebrate 200 years of ministry, with an entire year of special events," said the Rev. Bill Masciangelo.

"Early worshippers began meeting 200 years ago in the same church that is still used for services, Sunday school, and social gatherings. This church, which has undergone renovations and additions since it was built in 1809, houses a congregation that began gathering as early as 1672," he said.

The anniversary celebration started with an historic worship service and blessing. Masciangelo reflected on the past 200 years of ministry in the New Hope Community.

Several worshippers came in period costumes to help the church celebrate its 200th birthday. "There has been

such good fellowship today," said Helen Godfrey. "The Lord has blessed us with Pastor Bill and his wife. This has been a wonderful day. My prayer is when this year is over the Lord will continue to bless us."

After the worship service, the celebration continued with Mack Nixon, Chairman of the Perquimans County Board of Commissioners opening a bell ringing event by ringing the historic 250-pound church bell followed by a luncheon.

"This has turned out to be a really nice event," Gayle Godfrey said. Philip Darnell added, "The people really like ringing the old church bell and the different activities are bringing everyone together."

On display were many historical pieces from the church's history: a communion goblet and communion table; collection boxes; a Bible; and the original church bell on display in the narthex. Outside was a replica of a 200-year-old covered wagon built by Carl Eure.

Mary Hundley said, "I think this is such a nice way to start of the New Year, and this will make everyone look forward to the other 200th anniversary events that are coming up."

"The message today from the pastor was very appropriate as he talked about our past, present and future. God will continue to be with us in the future," said Debbie Stallings.



Several worshippers spent time researching their authentic period costumes for New Hope's 200th anniversary event.



Standing beside a replica of a 200-year old wagon are (L-R) Susan and Bill Masciangelo, Mary Hundley, Gayle Godfrey, Debbie Godfrey, and Pat Oglesby.

Kathy Brizius said, "The people look like they are enjoying themselves. The atmosphere is great and everyone is so friendly. The period clothing looks wonderful."

Pastor Bill Masciangelo added, "I'm thrilled with the number of people who are visiting with us today and all those who came in costumes. They did quite a bit of research to make them authentic. The costumes added flair and color to the activities."

## A history of ministry

On June 2, 1809, John Sutton and his wife Martha H. Sutton conveyed two acres of land for \$10 to John Russell, George Sutton, Joseph Sutton, Henry Raper, and Lamuel Whedbee, trustees of New Hope Methodist Episcopal Church. It was on this site that the oldest Methodist church in Perquimans County, was constructed in 1809, New Hope Methodist Episcopal Church.

Elements of the original church survive, such as the entrances surmounted by transoms with eagle motifs—a national symbol popular during the Federal era.

The same hand-hewn timbers, put together with hand-wrought nails,

form the original structure, and the fanlight originally located in the front gable is now in the vestibule gable.

Near the church are numerous graves, including those of three Civil War veterans. The church also preserves the county's few surviving grave houses—low, coffin-sized, gable roofed, wooden structures, marking and protecting graves. After grave houses in the church cemetery were destroyed during Hurricane Isabel, church member Lee Stallings rebuilt them.

## Sacred place, sacred purpose

Two hundred years have passed and the church building, the world, and its people have changed considerably. But, many things have not changed. This sacred place is still used for a sacred purpose, and that prayer still ascends to the very rafters as it did in 1809.

For more informational about bi-centennial activities for New Hope visit [www.nhumc.info](http://www.nhumc.info) or call the church at 252-455-7117.

\* Patricia Walker Murphy is a member of the New Hope 200th Anniversary Team.

## Academy director named From page 1

He served in churches throughout the North Carolina Conference including Gibson Memorial in Spring Hope, St. Marks in Raleigh, Epworth in Durham, and Haymount in Fayetteville.

Although officially retired, he currently serves as the Discipleship Pastor at North Raleigh UMC.

"I am very passionate about the work the Academy seeks to do," Gentle said. "I believe strongly in the mission and look forward to bringing that mission to life for leaders throughout the Conference."

In addition to his work within the conference, Gentle served as a visiting professor at Duke University Divinity School and Southeastern Baptist Seminary.

He currently serves on the Board of Trustees of Methodist University and is the former chair of the board of the UM Retirement Homes.

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For information, contact Shannon Williams, interim director of development, at (919) 832-9560, ext. 231.

The Academy for Leadership Excellence is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization related by faith to the North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

\* Shannon Williams is interim director of development for the Academy for Leadership Excellence.

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# 53 United Methodists in the 111th US Congress

By Albert J. Menendez \*

Fifty-three United Methodists are serving in the 111th Congress, a decline of eight from the last three Congresses, but the denomination is still third in total congressional membership.

While there are seven newly elected United Methodists in the 111th Congress, compared to five in the 110th Congress, an unusual number of Methodist members retired, died in office or were defeated for re-election, resulting in the overall reduction.

Unlike 2006, when all newly elected United Methodists were Democrats, five of this year's new United Methodist members are Republicans while two are Democrats.

Seven newly elected United Methodist Republicans take seats in the House of Representatives.

Nine United Methodists will serve in the Senate, a decline of four from

the previous Congress.

Senator Richard Burr is currently the only United Methodist in Congress from North Carolina since Elizabeth Dole of lost her re-election campaign.



of its four House members claiming membership in the denomination. Half of the Kansas delegation is United Methodist. Twenty-five states elected at least one United Methodist to Congress in 2008.

Muslims and eight Eastern Orthodox Christians in Congress.

The United Methodist Church also has five members who are or will be serving as state governors.

Two United Methodists are leaving as governors of their states including Janet Napolitano of Arizona who will become secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

\* Albert J. Menendez is a freelance writer and research director for Americans for Religious Liberty.

Editor's note: Information in this story is based on the religious affiliations reported by congressional staffs to Congressional Quarterly, the Almanac of American Politics and VoteSmart.com. This report reflects races decided or vacancies filled by Jan. 5. Information on the governors' religious affiliation comes from CNN and The Almanac of American Politics.

## Split between parties

Congressional United Methodists are split almost equally between the two parties, with 27 Democrats and 26 Republicans.

Texas has the largest number of United Methodist members with 11, followed by Florida with five, and Arkansas, Indiana, Michigan and Kansas with three each.

In terms of strength within state delegations, Arkansas is a United Methodist stronghold, with three

## Five state governors

The United Methodist Church has the third highest religious representation in Congress, following Roman Catholics and Baptists.

Jews, Presbyterians and Episcopalians are in fourth, fifth and sixth place, respectively. Nondenominational Protestants, Lutherans, nondenominational Christians, and Mormons complete the top 10.

There are also two Buddhists, two

# IRA charitable rollovers are reinstated for 2009

Congress has again provided a charitable gift opportunity for everyone who is older than age 70½ and owns an IRA retirement account.

From now until December 2009, these individuals may contribute any amount up to \$100,000 directly from their IRA to a qualified charity, such as their local United Methodist church, without paying income taxes

on the distribution.

"Or an individual might prefer to place an endowment gift in an account with your United Methodist Foundation to benefit a special ministry within the North Carolina Conference," said the Rev. Jim Mentzer of the United Methodist Foundation in Raleigh.

"If you have social security income

and/or do not itemize your deductions, this provision could be very beneficial to you," he added.

This program allows a person already taking required minimum distributions from an IRA to give some, or all, of those dollars to a qualified charitable organization without having the distribution count as taxable income for the year they make this gift.

This means that a charitable gift can be made without having to itemize deductions. Moreover, the reduction in taxable income may mean that Social Security benefits will not be taxed as heavily as might otherwise be the case.

Here are a few "fine points" about this charitable strategy:

- Gifts may be made from traditional and Roth IRAs only;
- Nobody under the age of 70 1/2 can take advantage of this option;
- The money must come out of the IRA directly to the charity;
- The donor cannot receive any benefit from the charity because of the gift;
- The gift is not included in one's taxable income for the year;
- The gift, however, does count towards the IRS required minimum distribution (MRD) for the year.

To find out if this special charitable gift program fits a specific individual's needs, Mentzer suggests talking with a financial or tax advisers.

Or, contact him at United Methodist Foundation (919-836-0029) for more information.

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## United Methodists comment on Church Mutual service.

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# Black History Reflections

By Lawrence Johnson \*

February is Black History Month, a time to commemorate African-Americans who have changed the world. Gratitude for the celebration of Black History Month, and more importantly, the study of black history, is owed to Dr. Carter G. Woodson.

Born to parents who were former slaves, he spent his childhood working in the Kentucky coal mines and enrolled in high school at age twenty. Woodson graduated within two years and later went on to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard.

The scholar was disturbed to find in his studies that history books largely ignored the black American population, and when blacks did figure into the picture, it was generally in ways that reflected the inferior social position they were assigned at the time. Ponder the words of Dr. Woodson:

*We should emphasize not Negro History, but the Negro in history. What we need is not a history of selected races or nations, but the history of the world void of national bias, race hate, and religious prejudice.*

*— Carter Woodson on founding Negro History Week, 1926*

In 1915, he established the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (now called the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History) and a year later founded the widely respected *Journal of Negro History*. In 1926, he launched Negro History Week as an initiative to bring national attention to the contributions of black people throughout American history.

As a part of the United States' 1976 bicentennial, the week-long observance was extended to the entire month of February in order to have enough time for celebratory programs and activities and became officially known as Black History Month.

The month encompasses an entire population of people who possess a unique heritage and perception of the world. History has not always been kind to African-Americans and, as with other minority groups, has left out important contributions made by its members. Black History Month rectifies the oversights, whether omitted purposely or not.

The celebration of Black History Month is a celebration of black Americans and an opportunity for learning more about their contributions to the story of this country.

Black History Month is also a celebration for all American citizens, for the success or failure of one people is the success or failure of all.

In a quest for knowledge and understanding, hear these words:

*We cannot change the past, but we can change our attitude toward it. Uproot guilt and plant forgiveness. Tear out arrogance*

*and seed humility. Exchange love for hate — thereby, making the present comfortable and the future promising.*

*— Maya Angelou*

\* Lawrence Johnson is NC Conference director of multicultural ministries.



Pages 7-10 feature articles related to Black History Month. Some of the stories are from churches reaching out into their communities in the NC Conference. Resources for the celebration of Black History Month are also included.

## Spreading the love of Christ in the city: Asbury Temple UMC, Durham

The Wright Room at Asbury Temple UMC in Durham is a summer program for children and youth which operates Monday through Thursday from 8am to 1pm.

The Wright Room spreads the love of Christ in the heart of the city by offering hope, healing and hospitality to the children living in the community.

The program provides free breakfast and lunch, Bible study, fun activities and the love of Christ.

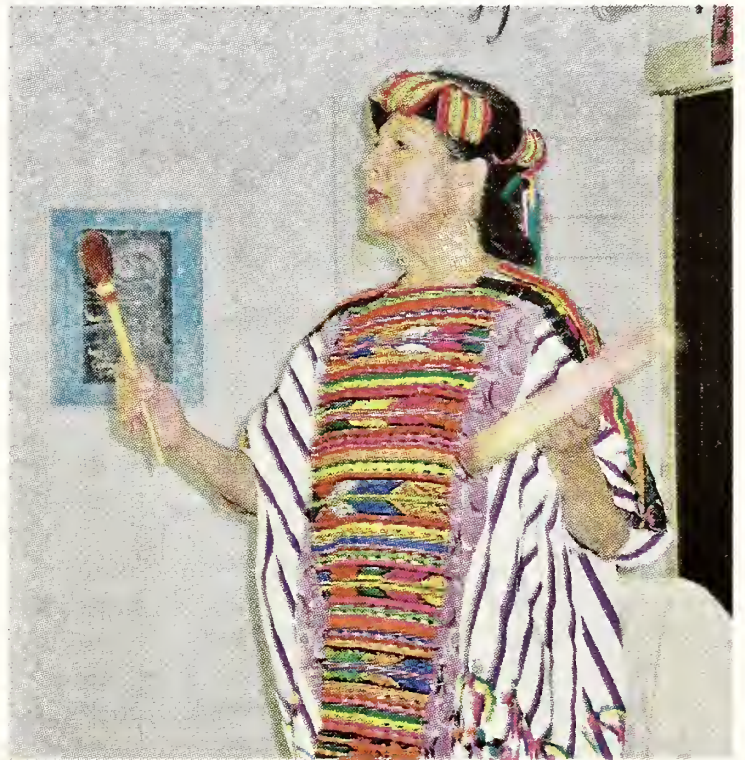
The Wright Room serves a diverse population of African-American, Hispanic/Latino and Caucasian children.

The leader of the program is Hannah Bonner who previously served as a Duke intern for the church. Volunteers include high school youth and adults.

The program is also blessed to have volunteers from Reconciliation, Mt. Sylvan and Calvary UM churches.

The children are assigned to a group with 2 volunteers

assigned to each group. Each day the children are involved in Bible study led by Pastor Shane Benjamin. There is also music, art and play time. Some days feature invited guests to share with the children.





# Celebration of 40-year journey toward inclusivity

By Ciona D. Rouse \*

The United Methodist journey toward inclusivity has been like a woodworker creating art out of unrefined materials, the United Methodist Commission on Religion and Race said in a video which celebrated the commission's 40th anniversary.

"Creating a masterpiece is like taking a risk-filled journey....

It unfolds at stages, requiring patience, persistence and perseverance," said the narrator in the video shown at the 2008 General Conference last spring. The conference celebrated the birthday of the commission and reflected on the denomination's journey of inclusivity.

"Like all journeys, it hasn't always been easy," Bishop Linda Lee, president of the commission's board of directors, said to the conference.

"The church has struggled with racism — both individual and institutional. The experience of racism has caused members of the United Methodist family to march and to preach and to speak out, infused with the energy of righting long-ignored wrongs," she said.

The denomination created the Commission on Religion and Race in 1968 to ensure that racially segregated conferences would fully integrate by 1972, following the dissolution of the Central Jurisdiction, which was drawn by racial, rather than geographic, lines. The 1972 General Conference voted to make the commission permanent to allow it not only to usher the denomination through integration but also to lead the transition into a racially just and fully inclusive church.

"You know, we were dragging our feet on race ...I said, you know, we talk about it—we're all God's children, but we ain't acting like it," said Rhett Jackson of South Carolina, an original commission member who presented the proposal to merge the South Carolina conference.

## Turned away from churches

The video featured retired Bishop Woodie White, who served as the first executive for the commission until 1984, when he became a bishop. White recalled life in the denomination before the commission.

"In the '60s, there were people who were actually turned away from churches because of the color of their skin....It's hard to believe that that was the kind of church in which we lived," White said.

Soon after the creation of the commission, he said, they realized that their work would go beyond issues of blacks and whites; the com-



Bishop Linda Lee (left) and Erin Hawkins lead the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the United Methodist Commission on Religion and Race at 2008 General Conference. UMNS photos by Mike DuBose.

mission would also need to work toward multiculturalism because the denomination included Hispanic, Native-American and Asian-American members as well.

The General Commission on Religion and Race has reviewed, monitored and promoted racial inclusivity and reconciliation for The United Methodist Church in its first 40 years. Additionally, it has hosted workshops and training events and published resources to educate the denomination.

"Forty years ago, the inclusion into the Methodist Church — demanded by African-Americans — was, for many, a radical challenge," said Erin Hawkins, top executive of the Commission on Religion and Race. "Today, in this body of Christ called United Methodists, it is a radical expectation."

## New issues to confront

The commission looks to the future, hoping to expand its work "confronting oppression that reaches past United States borders," said Hawkins.

"We have to learn how to confront the new issues from the perspective of inclusiveness," said the Rev. Yolanda Pupo-Ortiz, a former executive of the commission.

"The commission has guided us on our journey to inclusiveness with a bold faithfulness, and it is my prayer that their witness will continue to lead us toward God's kin-dom," said the Rev. Renae Extrum-Fernandez of the California-Nevada Annual (regional) Conference, a former director of the commission.

Following the presentation, commissioners hosted a birthday party in the lobby of the Fort Worth Convention Center, distributing sun catchers and birthday cupcakes to General Conference delegates and visitors.

\* Ciona D. Rouse is a freelance writer in Nashville, Tenn.

## Sallie A. Crenshaw 1900-1986

Sallie Alford Crenshaw was one of the first African-American woman to receive full-clergy rights.

Born in 1900 in LaGrange, Georgia, she received her education in the Chattanooga public schools, Tennessee A&I State College, Tennessee Wesleyan College, and the University of Nebraska.

Crenshaw joined the Wiley Methodist church and began her pastoral ministry in 1931 as the lay pastor of the East Chattanooga and Tyner churches. She was ordained deacon in 1932 and elder in 1936, making her (along with Laura J. Lange) one of the first two women to be ordained as local elders in the Central Jurisdiction.

In 1958, when she and Nora E. Young were received into full connection in the East Tennessee Conference, they became not only the first women to be received into full connection in the Central Jurisdiction but also the first two women received into full connection in the Holston Conference and the entire Southeastern Jurisdiction as well.

Crenshaw served as a missionary to African-American workers in the coalfields of Virginia and also served churches in Bakewell (Hamilton County, Tennessee); Elizabethtown, Tennessee; and Glade Spring and Wytheville, Virginia. She served as Church and Community Worker in the Bluefield District, and as Conference Director of Youth Work for three years.

An historical marker in Chattanooga, TN marks the site where Crenshaw established the St. Elmo Mission in 1947 after "being appalled by the number of black children left alone without day care." The center was later renamed in her honor.

Crenshaw retired in 1971 as a member of the Holston Conference and died December 12, 1986, at the age of eighty-six.

Sources: *Chattanooga* by Chattanooga African-American Museum (Arcadia Publishing, 2005) and the United Methodist General Commission on Archives and History Web site [www.gcqh.org/](http://www.gcqh.org/)



## Harry Hosier c. 1750-1806

Harry Hosier was born a slave in North Carolina. Following the Revolutionary War he gained his freedom from his Maryland master and was converted to Methodism.

His sermon, "The Barren Fig Tree," preached at Adam's Chapel, Fairfax County, Virginia, in May of 1781, was the first recorded Methodist sermon by an African-American.

Hosier became famous as a traveling evangelist up and down the Atlantic seaboard. He was a companion on evangelistic trips with Asbury, Coke, Jesse Lee, and Freeborn Garrettson, and was heralded as one of the greatest preachers of his time.

His influence is said to be one of the most important factors in the early spread of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America.

Source: General Commission on Archives and History Web site [www.gcqh.org/](http://www.gcqh.org/).



# Celebrating Black History Month

*Understanding one another is urgent today as the world becomes smaller. Knowing and understanding the history of one another makes all better positioned to be appreciative of one's own and others' differences.*

*Celebration leads to providing experiences that create lasting impressions and knowledge. This month is especially significant to enhance a sense of the differences, sameness, and uniqueness of every individual—to embrace the contributions of all in this shrinking society.*

*The enlargement of understanding of one another and expanding of knowledge is enriching. Take advantage of this month to grow and work to more fully integrate all histories into one.*

By Maggie Jackson, a director of the General Board of Global Ministries, Professor and Director of the School of Social Work at Cleveland State University and trustee of Northwestern College, Africa University, and the Methodist Theological School of Ohio.

Excerpt adapted from <http://new.gbgm-umc.org/resources/annual/blackhistorymonth/introduction/>

Beyond radio and television specials on Black History Month are numerous other resources for expanding knowledge of black history.

**Web sites:**

- Library of Congress [www.loc.gov/topics/africanamericans/](http://www.loc.gov/topics/africanamericans/)
- General Board of Discipleship [www.gbod.org](http://www.gbod.org) and select Worship, then African-American from the Ethnic Resources menu on the left
- General Board of Global Ministries [new.gbgm-umc.org/resources/annual/blackhistorymonth/index.cfm?SR=11](http://new.gbgm-umc.org/resources/annual/blackhistorymonth/index.cfm?SR=11)
- AT&T Knowledge Network Explorer-Black History ( under black History hot list Click on Black History Month) [www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/BHM/index.html](http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/BHM/index.html)
- This Far By Faith: African-American Spiritual Journeys [www.pbs.org/thisfarbyfaith/](http://www.pbs.org/thisfarbyfaith/)
- History Channel [www.history.com/minisites/blackhistory](http://www.history.com/minisites/blackhistory)
- Biography Channel [www.biography.com/blackhistory/index.jsp](http://www.biography.com/blackhistory/index.jsp)

**Books:**

- *The Past Matters: A Chronology of African-Americans in The United Methodist Church* by Marilyn Magee Talbert
- *Black Church Beginnings: The Long-Hidden Realities of the First Years* by Henry Mitchell
- *There Is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America* by Vincent Harding
- *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, edited by James M. Washington
- *Black People in the Methodist Church and Traveling Light* by William B. McClain
- *Heritage & Hope: The African-American Presence in United Methodism*, edited by Grant S. Shockley
- *Methodism's Racial Dilemma: The Story of the Central Jurisdiction* by James Thomas
- *Our Time Under God Is Now* by Woodie W. White

## Development of heritage center continues

**The African-American Heritage Center is gathering photos and artifacts from black Methodist history**

By Linda Green \*

Many people are unaware that African-Americans' involvement in Methodism dates back to the beginnings of the church in America, a United Methodist bishop says.

A lot of whites don't know that African-Americans were a crucial part of Methodism before the racially segregated Central Jurisdiction was created in 1939, says Bishop Forrest Stith.

And some African-Americans have been so "obsessed with the injustices of the Central Jurisdiction," he said, that they seldom share or remember the stories of black involvement in the church as far back as the Christmas Conference of 1784, when the church in America was organized, and of African-Americans' presence at such historical sites as Epworth Chapel and Strawbridge Meeting House.

"African-Americans were present in all those settings and made a difference," Stith said. "To know one's history determines how one lives in the present and the future."

Stith is president of the board of directors for the African-American Methodist Heritage Center. The center's mission is "preserve and protect artifacts and be accessible for research about African-American people in Methodism" in order to help people understand the contributions that blacks have made to Methodism. The center is gathering the stories, artifacts and other historical

items of black Methodists from the mid-18th century to today.

The 2004 General Conference approved creating the heritage center, which was originally proposed at a national meeting of Black Methodists for Church Renewal. Before General Conference approved it, the church had "no one single place that was exclusively dedicated to the restoration and preservation of the African-Americans who contributed so significantly to and through Methodism," Stith said.

Although books have been written and churches have separate museums and exhibits, "no one entity had the capacity to exhibit or portray through various modes, and capture our story," he said. "Only a heritage center would suffice."

African-American United Methodist have longed for "our place," Stith said. "Like Joshua paused at the Jordan River and demanded that each tribe pick up a stone and carry it across so that the children's children will know 'how we passed over,' so too, the heritage center will be our stones, so that our children's children will know our story."

African-Americans have had a significant impact on Methodism during the past 266 years, he said. "Unfortunately, the vibrant history of African-Americans' impacts on Methodism remains largely undocumented, untold and unappreciated by Methodists and by the general society." The African-American Methodist Heritage Center seeks

to "rectify this deplorable historical oversight," he said.

The center has developed a partnership with the United Methodist Commission on Archives and History at Drew University in Madison, N.J. and has offices and archives there.

An endowment fund for the center was established by the 2004 General Conference through the United Methodist Church Foundation.

Since 2004, the churchwide Commission on Archives and History and the Asbury church has been receiving large quantities of artifacts, memorabilia, pictures, journals, letters, exhibits and other items for the heritage center.

Donations include an exhibit on the history of black colleges, minutes of the Washington Conference since 1912, and materials from the late Bishop W.T. Handy's family and other bishops. The commission is housing all of the items.

Through Web sites and programs, the center will link with historic institutions such as Gulfside Assembly in Waveland, Miss., and churches such as Mother African Zoar UMC in Philadelphia.

For more information, on donating artifacts or to make a gift to the center, visit their Web site at [www.aamhc-umc.org/index.html](http://www.aamhc-umc.org/index.html).

\* Linda Green is a UM News Service news writer based in Nashville, Tenn. This article was adapted from one originally published in February 2005.





## Feed My Sheep Food Ministry - Durham

The Feed My Sheep Food Ministry provides food and toiletries to the northeast central Durham community and beyond each 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of the month. Additionally, a hot meal is served. Volunteers include church members from Elon UMC and Duke Divinity School. The chef is also a volunteer from Duke Divinity School.



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## Community Ministry Beauty Spot - Purvis UMC



The Beauty Spot- Purvis Community ministry, supported by funds from a Comprehensive Plan of Inclusiveness Grant, has been very active. Our goal was to provide opportunities for people of all levels, and particularly across denominational separateness, to experience through activities and programs planned with their input for their participation.

The education, evangelism, and mission team leaders of Beauty Spot, along with the pastor, have taken the leadership in providing these activities which include, but not limited to, the following:

1. Youth Gospel Explosion;
2. Monday Older Adult activity;
3. Outdoor Camping Sunday, and
4. Gatherings for Activities such as Martin Luther King, Jr. celebrations and African-American History celebrations.

All of these activities have been successful in that they brought people together from various churches and across racial and ethnicity lines.

Beauty Spot Church will continue these activities through 2009 and hopefully beyond.

— Jimmy F. Cummings, Pastor



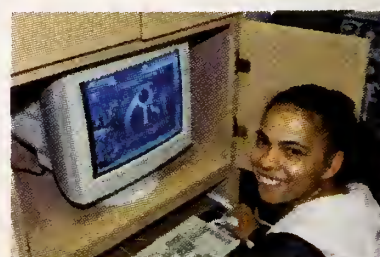
## Robeson Community Ministries Institute - New Zion UMC



Due to the existence of the Robeson Community Ministries Institute, individuals have been empowered to become self-sustaining and have acquired the necessary skills to manage their households without continued assistance from the government.

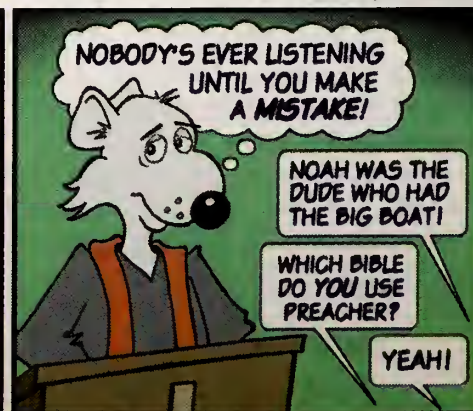
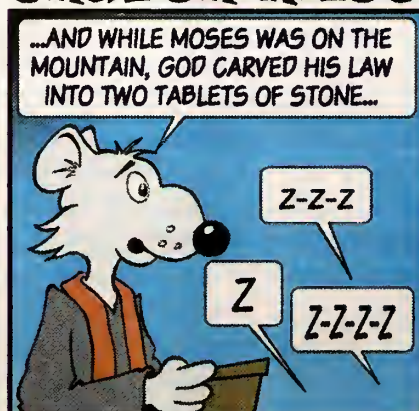
- ♦ 55% of the families enrolled have completed certification in a specific vocation.
- ♦ 33% are now employed while 12% continued their education at a community college or university.

— The Rev. William E. Cummings, pastor



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Dorothy Height

## Inauguration from pg. 3

the civil rights pioneer led the 30th anniversary re-enactment of the historic march that led to the passage of the Voting Rights Act.

As a UM minister, Lowery was elected a delegate to three General Conferences and presided over an annual conference as acting bishop in 1966. His prophetic voice was instrumental in moving the church toward the goal of inclusiveness. He served as pastor of United Methodist churches in Mobile and Birmingham, Ala., and Atlanta, where he led Central Church for 18 years.

## Living to see the day

Height, who was invited by Obama to be his guest at the ceremony, told *The New York Times* that she never expected to live to see an African-American elected as president of the United States.

"This is real recognition that civil rights was not just what Dr. King dreamed," she said. "But it took a lot of people a lot of work to make this happen, and they feel part of it."

Height was a national executive staff member with YWCA for 33 years and was elected national president of the National Council of Negro Women in 1957, where she led a crusade for justice for black women. She envisioned the plans for the National Centers for African-American Women and the Dorothy I. Height Leadership Institute, which were launched in 1996.

Height has received numerous accolades for her civil rights work including a Congressional Medal of Honor awarded by President George W. Bush in 2004.

She also was presented with the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Bill Clinton in 1994 and the Presidential Citizenship Medal by President Ronald Reagan in 1989.

\* Linda Bloom is a UM News Service news writer based in New York.

# Young adult clergy numbers increase from page 3

sees "anyone my age in my 600-member church."

"The United Methodist Church needs to recognize the fact that so many young people do feel called! Traditional understandings of what it means to be ordained clergy, however, have restricted many of these ways of serving," Agtarap said.

The denomination as a whole is looking for the balance between credentialing strong leaders and creating new avenues for candidates to enter and move through the candidacy process, Lassiat said.

## Ignoring God's call?

While young elders have represented 15 percent of elders in the church, the overall number of elders continues to decline. In 1985, there were 21,378 elders, and the number decreased to 17,480 in 2008. The average age of clergy increased from 46.8 to 52.1. The greatest growth is in the 55-70 age group.

The Rev. Justin Halbersma, 28, said. "I believe there aren't more clergy under the age of 35 in the church because we have a church that (has) let them ignore the call God has placed on their lives."

Lack of young clergy deprives the ministry, according to the report. "The new ideas, creativity, energy and cultural awareness often exhibited by the young are lost. And with more persons entering ministry with fewer years to serve, the wisdom and experience that can come with long tenures in ministry are also in jeopardy."

Halbersma said, "God has called people of all ages, genders and ethnicities, and that is key. God has called them, and when we as the church fail to help a certain group of people nurture and respond to that call, then we all lose out."

Young clergy are "part of the generation that is now sitting before us as youth and children," he said. "Young clergy understand their world, and they know how to speak in relevant ways. If given the chance, they could help the church as a whole become more relevant."

"Those who are new to clergy leadership may lack a certain amount of expertise. However, it is our respon-

sibility as a denomination to develop effective ways to train and prepare new clergy for their leadership roles," Lassiat said. "We have an opportunity in developing young adult leadership to prepare our denomination for the challenges and opportunities it will face over the next 50 years."

"If sufficient numbers of young adults do not enter the ministry, the church will have fewer clergy in the pipeline with the experience necessary to handle challenging pastoral appointments and fill denominational leadership roles," the study said.

## Attracting young members

The Church wants to begin 650 new churches by 2012 by planting churches that reach more people, younger people and diverse people.

Young clergy have certain advantages in reaching out to their own generation, the report noted. "Just as important, the mere presence of young clergy in a church symbolizes that younger persons are valued as leaders and participants."

The five conferences where young elders are highest as a percentage of elders in 2008 are Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama-West Florida, North Alabama and Oklahoma. The largest

number of young elders is found in Western North Carolina with 60.

Conferences seeing an increase have dedicated time, resources and people to identifying what young adults need and want in considering the call to ordained ministry.

## Developing resources

The UM Board of Higher Education and Ministry is helping the church recruit young clergy. In addition to its annual Exploration events, the agency in 2007 reported on best practices used by programs that are developing young adult clergy.

The board is working on a collection of essays from people who are called to ordained ministry as well as a new DVD resource/booklet called "Ordained Ministry" about ministry and the different ways that people can serve.

In 2006, the agency launched [www.explorecalling.org](http://www.explorecalling.org) to provide information and resources for youth and young adults as they consider how God is calling them to serve.

"Young clergy do, indeed, matter," says the report.

\* Linda Green is a UM News Service news writer based in Nashville, Tenn.

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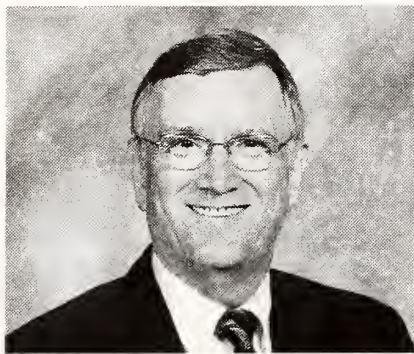
**ALLRED, Susan L.** (Burlington: retired) died Dec. 10. A service of Death and Resurrection was held at Duke Chapel on Jan. 3.

**CREECH, C. McGee** (Goldsboro: retired) died Jan. 12. A funeral service was held Jan. 15 at Bethel UMC in Wayne County.

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By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

March

# adult BIBLE STUDY

Based on the scripture lessons of Cokesbury's Adult Bible Studies series.

## March 1, 2009

**Text: Ezekiel 11:14-21**  
**"A New Spirit"**

The name "Ezekiel" means "God strengthens." The prophet's name is a reminder that new beginnings, fresh starts, and hope for tomorrow do not come just because we grab a hold of our boot straps and tug. It is God who strengthens. It is God who gives a new heart and puts a new spirit within (Ezekiel 11:19a).

In this week's study lesson, it is not at all clear that the exiled people felt much need for a new heart. Sometimes we use the phrase, "He will have to hit bottom before he can start up." God's scattered people seem to be on track to hit bottom. Yet, there is no room for pointing a finger. During the period of the Exile, there was a

temptation for those who were left in Jerusalem to assume they were the chosen, special people of God, while imagining that all those in exile were enemies of God.

Truth to tell, sometimes those of us within the Church family have just a little touch of the same feeling, pondering that we might be the only ones available to God. Not so! Jesus reminds us that if need be, God can use the stones to cry out God's message (Luke 19:40). God's quiver holds more than one arrow! The Church is not the only weapon at God's disposal!

Some of the faithful flock back in Jerusalem might have been a bit upset that God would offer a new spirit, a new heart, for those in exile. After all, were not those people in exile because of the moral failures of the nation? But here is the prophet Ezekiel proclaiming that God will replace hearts of stone (cold, calculating, unfeeling) with hearts of flesh (purposeful, alive, warm) —Ezekiel 11:19b.

Ezekiel is clear that God's love extends both to those in Jerusalem and to those in exile ("the whole house of Israel," "your own kin"—Ezekiel 11:15). There are no special favors for being in exile or in Jerusalem; both are called to full obedience, avoiding the "detestable things and their abominations" (Ezekiel 11:21). And it is God who gives the heart for obedience, the inauguration of the new person. After all, "if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17). God is in the new heart business.

### What Someone Else Has Said:

*Building the Mission-Shaped Church in Australia* (ed., Alan Nichols, General Synod) includes this statement: "A missionary church exists for the transformation of the community that it serves, through the power of the gospel and the Holy Spirit. It is not self-serving, self-seeking, or self-focused."

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of new beginnings, break my heart's desire to please only me and give me a new heart that wants only to serve You, to enjoy You, to glorify You..."

## March 8, 2009

**Text: Ezekiel 34:23-31**  
**"New Leadership"**

Maybe it is just as well that the printed text in the study book begins with verse 23. The earlier verses, the opening lines of chapter 34 of Ezekiel, are filled with accusations of the failure of the leaders of God's people. And, let's face it: most of us who are writing or reading this commentary are persons who are leaders among God's people. Maybe it is just as well that we do not have to hear our names called as shepherds who have been stuffing our own mouths while the flock starves (34:2).

It is painful to read of the ways that Israel's false shepherds have abused their place among God's people: no food for the hungry, no clothing for the naked, no healing for the sick, no rescue of the stray, no kindness in ruling (Ezekiel 34:3-4). Do I recognize any of my failures in Ezekiel's pointed words?

Ezekiel argues that God is not going to put up with such neglect of God's purposes. In verse 11, God says that God's very self will become the shep-

herd. "I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep...(Ezekiel 34:15)." God will not leave God's sheep unattended. If necessary, God will intervene.

But God does not stop there. Our study text begins as God promises to establish a human shepherd again (Ezekiel 34:23, 24). God still wants us to be shepherds! I am reminded of our sacramental life: Baptism and Holy Communion. Baptism uses water, something God provides fully for God's creation; Holy Communion uses bread and the juice of the grape, products of our work with God's creation. The Sacraments thus remind us both of God's providing and our cooperation with that provision.

That is what is unfolding in this text. God will be the shepherd (34:11) but God will also expect a human shepherd to cooperate with God's purposes (34:23-24).

That is the new leadership to which God invites us. Maybe we should read those verses not printed in the study book. They are a pretty good roll call of what not to do!

### What Someone Else Has Said:

In *The Yoke of Obedience* (Abingdon Press), Dennis Campbell, former Dean of Duke Divinity School, writes, "The leadership of the church is to be a servant leadership. Leadership exists not for itself, but to enable the mission of the Christian community....The key to the idea is that the leader must allow the mission of the community to be uppermost."

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Savior, like a shepherd lead us! Move in our rough places in order to rescue us and then set us upon the mission of living and proclaiming and pointing toward Your abundant life..."

## March 15, 2009

**Text: Ezekiel 36:22-32**  
**"God's People Restored Again"**

What's all this with holiness? We expect God to be holy, but what about people? Check this morning's paper. Do you see many signs and marks of holy lives?

Yet it is clear that not only is God holy, but God calls us to lives of holiness. In the Wesleyan tradition, we refer to this as the work of sanctifica-

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# March adult Bible study *continued from page 12*

tion. It is not our work that makes it possible; it is God's work. In order to make clear the holiness of God, God works to make God's people holy (Ezekiel 36:23-25). We hear an echo in this claim of God upon us when we baptize: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you" (Ezekiel 36:25).

Recall the renunciation of sin that is part of the baptismal covenant: "Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of your sin?" (p. 40, *United Methodist Hymnal*). Holiness.

Recall the reminder in the baptismal covenant that it is God who empowers holy living: "Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves?" (p. 40, *The United Methodist Hymnal*). Holiness.

Recall the congregational response during the service of baptism to "reaffirm both your rejection of sin and your commitment to Christ" (p. 40, *United Methodist Hymnal*). Holiness.

Our United Methodist liturgy calls to mind what Wesleyan theologians articulate: a journey toward Christian perfection, full love of God and full love of neighbor.

The holiness of God has magnetic power to draw us toward holy living. Of course, we sometimes come kicking and screaming, but it is God's purpose that God's holy name be honored by the way we receive God's gift of holiness (Ezekiel 36:22-23). "...Through you I display my holiness" (Ezekiel 36:23).

## What Someone Else Has Said:

Mark Batterson (*In a Pit with a Lion on a Snowy Day*, Multnomah Books) has written: "Goodness is not the absence of badness. You can do nothing wrong and still do nothing right. Our calling is much higher than simply running away from what's wrong. We're called to chase lions—look for opportunities in our problems and obstacles, and take risks to reach for God's best."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Holy, holy, holy. Lord. Break down my barriers that block out Your holiness..."

**March 22, 2009**

**Text: Ezekiel 37:1-14**  
**"Prophesying New Life"**

A few decades ago, there was a prominent preacher-writer named Norman Vincent Peale. I had a teacher who was profoundly unimpressed

with Peale's book *The Power of Positive Thinking*. In fact, Mr. Haas said that rather than being known as "Norman Vincent Peale," the author should be called "Normally Convincing Spiel."

Although this characterization of Peale (and his book) might border on unkindness, there is a thread of truth in the clever play on words. What Professor Haas wanted to make sure we students understood was that any claim upon a positive future was not the result of our having good thoughts but was the effect of the power and presence of God.

That is the truth in this week's study text in Ezekiel. No amount of happy vibes and wishful pondering can turn dry bones into living bodies. When God asks Ezekiel (in the prophet's vision) "Mortal, can these bones live?," Ezekiel gives the only answer that has the ring of reality: "O Lord God, you know" (37:3). The answer is in the hands of God.

But, take note. The text does not invite us into passive waiting, sitting around twiddling our spiritual thumbs. God gives Ezekiel instruction: "Prophesy...say...O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord" (Ezekiel 37:4).

Even though it is transparent that it is God who gives breath, who gives life, who restores the dry bones, there is a God-entrusted role given to the prophet. It is helpful to recall that a prophet is not someone who predicts, but is someone who speaks for another. Ezekiel is speaking for God.

It is in speaking for God that Ezekiel is able to watch God's unfolding restoration of life. Speaking for God includes not only the words spoken to the bones (37:4, 7, 9, 10, 12), but also includes a hard, definitive look at the reality of the situation (37:1-2). There is no sugar-coating of the emptiness and the real death of the setting. Living in God's hope does not eliminate the need for realistic, painful, even heart-breaking assessment.

This text is an account of a vision. It gives us an insight into the potency of God's presence and into the potential of God's power. It repeats the theme of the biblical truth: Life comes from God (37:9, 13).

## BIRTHS

Baden Nicholas Hoyle was born Dec. 15 to Chaplain Will Hoyle (Bureau of Justice, Federal Prisons in Kittrell) and wife, Carrie.

Alexander Grayson Moreau, son of Tony and Erin Moreau (Durham: Rehoboth UMC) was born Jan. 11.

The text in no way predicts what that new life will look like, but it does proffer a hope that God is in charge and God invites us to live with and participate in that hope.

## What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Naming Grace* (Continuum), M. C. Hilbert writes: "Precisely in the midst of the darkness, Christians await the birth of the kind of 'hope against hope' that is at the heart of Christian belief in the resurrection."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "My hope is built..."

**March 29, 2009**

**Text: Ezekiel 47:1-12**  
**"Envisioning New Life"**

Have I told you this story before? When I was a little boy, our family used to go on summer vacations to Cherry Grove, South Carolina. We lived in Siler City, so in those days before GPS and air-conditioned cars, this could be a long, hot trip. One summer, we loaded the car, my mother and father in the front seat and my two sisters and I in the back of the '38 Chevrolet, my riding the hump in the middle.

We had gone about three blocks from our Chatham County home when my daddy said, "I'll give five dollars to the first one to see the Atlantic Ocean."

I perked up; I could certainly use such a princely sum. I plotted my strategy. Once we got close to the beach, I'd say, "I don't feel so very good. I think I need some fresh air."

Then, I figured, one of my sisters would let me move to a window seat (rather than risking my throwing up on her). Then, now at the window, as soon as we came to the slightest little beach dune, I'd stick my head out the window, spot the ocean, and claim the five dollars.

All of this planning took place in a matter of moments, so we were still in Siler City when my daddy said, "Well, there's the ocean. I guess I get to keep the five dollars." Ocean? In Siler City? (I guess he was right; he kept the money.) We were crossing over what generously might be called a creek. "That creek runs down to the Deep River," he said. "Then, the Deep River runs down to the Cape Fear, and then on to the ocean. It does not look like it, but that creek is the Atlantic Ocean."

This week's text in Ezekiel carries that message: what at first appears to be only an "ankle deep" creek (Ezekiel 47:3) is really powerful water that is deep enough for swimming (Ezekiel 47:5). When we envision the future that God will give, sometimes we are disappointed that the kingdom has not come immediately in full array. The prophet's vision underlines the truth: life-giving water does not always come at once.

Think of the baptism of an infant. It might look like a squawking baby and embarrassed parents, but it is the Atlantic Ocean! Think of the first steps away from a destructive habit. It might look pretty much like yesterday, but it is the Atlantic Ocean! Think of small steps for justice. It might look like "too little, too late" but it is the Atlantic Ocean!

## What Someone Else Has Said:

In *An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Abingdon Press), Justo L. González and Zaida Maldonado Pérez have written: "That is to say, our hope is grounded on the actions and promises of the God who does not lie."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Loving God of tomorrow, grant such a vision of hope that I can see the triumph even as I see only distance glimmers..."

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# calendar ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Have lunch at Don Lee

Don Lee Camp & Retreat Center is hosting Sunday meals in January and February starting Jan. 11 from noon until 4 p.m. Bring the family. Bring friends and neighbors! Go to <http://www.donleecenter.org/SundayDinneratDonLee.cfm> for more information and print out the flyer at Don Lee Dinner Flyer. To make reservations, call 1-800-535-5475!

## Lenten study offered by ZOE

ZOE Ministry is exploring what it means to willingly embrace the suffering of others with a Lenten opportunity to follow Jesus into the lives of children devastated by the HIV/AIDS crisis in Africa. The Lenten focus will lead participants through times of prayer, fasting, stories, and devotions one day a week.

"What matters is that we allow our hearts to be broken by the same things that break the heart of God," says the Rev. Greg Jenks, founder of ZOE Ministry. "At the end of the day what matters is that we have been faithful to God's calling to be present to those who are hurting, giving whatever we have to give."

Participants are encouraged to give the money saved by fasting six times to be multiplied through ZOE's programs of relief and empowerment. A \$5 lunch in the U.S. is the equivalent of 50 meals for a child in desperate need of relief aid. Six lunches is the equivalent of enough vegetable seeds for seven families to grow their own food. To learn more about this resource and more about ZOE's work, visit [www.zoeministry.org](http://www.zoeministry.org).

## Mission seed funds available

Mission Seed Funds are designed to facilitate and encourage United Methodist congregations of the NC Conference in risk-taking ministry and radical hospitality. These funds are meant to be supplemental funding that assists congregations and supported ministries in beginning new ministry that is directed along the Seven Pathways with specific emphasis on moving the congregation into hands-on ministry beyond the walls of the church. Applications are due Feb. 28, 2009 and can be downloaded at [www.nccmission.org/grants&advance.htm](http://www.nccmission.org/grants&advance.htm). For further information call the Missions and Justice Office at 800-849-4433 or 919-832-9560.

## Caring for Creation seminar

"Caring for Creation" coming March 5-8, 2009 at Lake Junaluska, will address how the faith community can promote justice for the Earth and its people. The seminar will provide biblical and theological support for developing opportunities for faith communities to be caretakers of this planet. Participants will attend three of 15 workshops. For details and registration, please see [www.lakejunaluska.com/caring-for-creation.aspx](http://www.lakejunaluska.com/caring-for-creation.aspx).

## Additional discount on Dells

UM Communications announced that Dell is offering an additional 7 percent off the discounted prices already available through the UMC Member Purchase Program, an exclusive discount program available to United Methodist churches, members, employees and volunteers. The additional discount is available on Dell laptop or desktop computers—including featured systems, as well as those customized to fit specific needs. It is not necessary that the computers be purchased for a church. They can be for home use or purchased as gifts by anyone who is affiliated with The United Methodist Church. Through the UMC Member Purchase Program, discounts are also available on electronics, printers, digital cameras, televisions and other items. For details, go to [www.dell.com/umc](http://www.dell.com/umc) and follow the link for a home computer purchase.

## Updated membership vows available

The new baptismal and professing membership vows of The United Methodist Church are available from the General Board of Discipleship Worship Web site at [http://www.gbod.org/worship/default.asp?act=reader&item\\_id=46866&doc\\_id=9,824](http://www.gbod.org/worship/default.asp?act=reader&item_id=46866&doc_id=9,824).

## Disciple Bible outreach training

This year's DBOM DISCIPLE Bible Study training in the NC Conference will take place in the following districts: Feb. 7: New Bern District -First UMC; Morehead City and Feb. 21: Rockingham District - Laurel Hill UMC. Training in all four levels of DISCIPLE Bible Study and the RINGS OF FELLOWSHIP youth study will be provided at these events. The event is free to all lay and clergy persons in the North Carolina Conference. Lunch will be provided for a fee of \$5. CEUs are available. Registration is required. For more details and to register, go to [www.nccumc.org/events.htm](http://www.nccumc.org/events.htm).

## Commission seeks stories of witnessing for Jesus Christ

The Commission on Evangelism invites clergy and laity to share stories of witnessing for Jesus Christ and inspiring others. Some may be included in the *Advocate*. Stories should be limited to about 350 words. The names can be real or may be changed to protect privacy. (Please note which is used.) Please e-mail these to [CarolDean@nccumc.org](mailto:CarolDean@nccumc.org) and note "Evangelism Story" in the subject line. Inspire others to "Make Disciples for Jesus Christ!"

## Christian education showcase

A two-week Christian Education Showcase for Cokesbury continues through Feb. 8. Free shipping as well as a 20% discount will be available for phone or online purchases of \$100 or more of Christian education resources during this time. Store purchases of \$100 or more will receive 20% off and a coupon for 15% off a future purchase. Resources for Vacation Bible School in particular will be highlighted during this showcase time. VBS resources qualify for these special showcase deals. For more information see [www.cokesbury.com](http://www.cokesbury.com).

## conference CALENDAR

### February

- 6-8 UMW Conference Executive Committee Retreat, Morehead City
- 7 Committee on Refugees and Immigrants Co-Sponsor Educational Event; North Raleigh UMC; 9-11am
- 16 Stewardship Committee; United Methodist Building, 10:30am-1pm
- 21 Youth Lay Speaker Training; 10am - 4pm; United Methodist Building
- 23 Conference Connectional Table; 10am - 4 pm, United Methodist Building
- 27-28 Conference 39 & Under Event, Campground UMC, Fayetteville
- 28 Global Vision Orientation, 11am, UM Building

### March

- 3 Academy for Leadership Excellence Days of Learning; Pine Forest UMC; Goldsboro, 9:30am - 3:30pm
- 6 Church Women United - World Day of Prayer
- 7 Confirmation Celebration, Methodist University
- 9-11 Stewardship Training for New Pastors; Trinity Center; Salter Path, NC
- 11 The Board of Institutions; Croasdaile; 12:30pm
- 17-22 Global Vision for Senior High Youth
- 28 Board of Higher Education & Campus Ministry

For more information on upcoming North Carolina Conference events, visit the conference web site at [www.nccumc.org](http://www.nccumc.org) and click on "Calendar."



# around the CONFERENCE



## Pennies for Pigs - Macedonia UMC Children

The children of Macedonia UMC in the Sanford District reached out to orphaned children in Africa through a "Pennies for Pigs" fundraising campaign. The \$805.81 they raised was given to ZOE Ministry's Giving Hope Empowerment Project in Rwanda. The money raised by the children of Macedonia was enough to purchase approximately 28 pigs for the orphans. When an orphan receives the gift of an animal, they then have an income-generation opportunity through the sale of offspring as well as fertilizer for gardens. The idea for the fundraiser was born after Macedonia's pastor, the Rev. Ron Scott, visited Rwanda in September 2008 with ZOE Ministry founder, the Rev. Greg Jenks, a clergy member of the NC Conference and missionary. During the visit, Scott was inspired to see children raising their siblings in abject poverty. Through ZOE's Giving Hope program, they are taught life-skills and offered the support needed to overcome their circumstances and provide for their families.



## All God's Children - Groundbreaking for POP

It was a big day for the small town of Aulander when All God's Children UMC broke ground for "The Place of Possibilities" last fall. To begin the groundbreaking, approximately 60 children, youth, and adults walked 7 miles with a cross to plant at the site. The land for the Place of Possibilities was donated by William "Bill" Early and had been in his family for over 100 years. "POP" as it is being called, will be a gym-a-torium with a regulation size basketball court, a full kitchen, classrooms and a stage area for worship. "POP" will house the Morning Lambs (Preschool) Program, the Afterschool Program, Older Children (Senior) Program, a Food Bank, a Clothing Distribution site and much more. The new center will be open from 7 a.m. until 11 p.m. Plans are also in the works to offer GED classes and an alternative to Out of School suspension. The center will work closely with the local YMCA and with the FCA. Speakers at the service included the Dr. Laura Early, Senator Ed Jones, District Superintendent Carl Frazier, and District Attorney Valerie Asbell. Acts UMC youth, from Apex, presented All God's Children with a gift of a motorized basketball goal. "POP" will also be used to house workteams that come to the area from other churches. Construction should be completed by summer 2009.



## Woodroof Honored at Rosemary UMC

R. A. "Woody" Woodroof, Jr. was recently recognized as an honorary member of the Church Council of Rosemary UMC in Roanoke Rapids. Woodroof joined Rosemary Methodist Church in 1951 and has served the Lord through the church for 57 years. In 1952, he joined the host of men who built the current sanctuary and laid the tile. They gathered at the site in the evenings after work to construct the church. In 1963, Woodroof helped build the education wing. He made countless repairs on the building and has been invaluable to the church as an electrician, plumber, and "jack of all trades." Through the years, Woodroof has served in many capacities in the church including on the Board of Trustees, the Finance Committee and the Council on Ministries. He has served as Treasurer, Sunday School Secretary, Chief Usher, and Chair of the Administrative Board. Woodroof is a charter member of the Rosemary United Methodist Men, since 1971. He is a long-time member of the Men's Bible Class and currently serves as its secretary.



## The Convocation for Pastors of Black Churches

Four hundred pastors and leaders attended the Convocation for Pastors of Black Churches held Jan. 6-9 at the Westin Galleria Hotel in Houston, TX sponsored by the General Board of Discipleship under the leadership of the Rev. Vance P. Ross. The NC Conference was represented by the Rev. Regina Henderson, a member of the design team, and Teresa Cook and Marcus Singleton, as program participants. The theme of the conference was "Building Bridges into the Future" based on the biblical text from Joshua 1. The opening evening service at the host church, Windsor Village UMC, contributed over \$5,000 to the Black College Fund and Africa University. The NC Conference attendees pictured above are: (Front row L-R) Regina Henderson, Teresa Cook, Tori Butler, Dora Dorsey, and Vermel Taylor; (Back row L-R) Albert Shuler, Lawrence Johnson, Kevin Baker, and Marcus Singleton.

### Submitting Around the Conference Information

Items for consideration in the Around the Conference section can be emailed to [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org). The deadline is the 5th day of the month prior to publication. All articles and photos are subject to editing. Photographs or art should be recorded in the largest size and highest resolution possible. Send in JPEG or TIFF formats. Articles and photos must be sent in separate files; photos cannot be embedded in articles or in photo viewing programs. See page 4 for information on submitting other types of information to the Advocate.



## Upcoming Conference on Prophetic Ministry named for Jack Crum

By Steve Hickie \*

At the memorial service for Dr. Jack Crum, Dr. Vernon Tyson lifted up a word from Ezekiel:

*"...Whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house), they shall know that there has been a prophet among them."* (Ezekiel 2:5, NRSV)

It is an apt epitaph for prophet Jack Crum, who died Sept. 20, 2008. From his work with the NC Council of Churches to his 11 pastoral charges, the congregations and constituencies knew that there had "been a prophet among them."

They weren't always all that happy about it, but Jack wore the prophet's mantle with grace and humility, a kind of invisible stole made visible in both his words and actions.

He and his wife, Kay, served 37 years in the NC Conference, including service through the Council of Churches, 1964-69.

To honor his memory and advance the cause of justice, Methodist Federation of North Carolina is presenting the first Jack Crum Conference on Prophetic Ministry, "A Cry in the Wilderness."

The conference will include a message from Bishop Kenneth Carder and panel and small group discussions. This is planned as a time to become familiar with needs, opportunities and challenges for local and international ministry and to rekindle a passion to serve all God's people.

The registration fee is \$25. If there are questions, contact Henry Jarrett at 919-606-5674 or jarretth@bell-south.net.

Checks should be made payable to



Jack and Kay Crum

MFSA-NC and mailed to MFSA-NC, c/o Henry Jarrett, P.O. Box 18311, Raleigh, NC 27619-8311.

### A vision of social action

Crum's obituary, as published in *The Daily Herald*, Roanoke Rapids on Sept. 23, 2008, said in part:

*Dr. Crum created the Endowment for a Prophetic Church in 1990 to aid churches in becoming active in social action*

*as distinguished from social service. The purpose is to change public prejudices and policies so that all races and nationality can have equal opportunity.*

*Promoting these prophetic actions, speaking for the Lord in behalf of the Kingdom of God, is the purpose of this award.*

*Dr. Crum also established a Scholarship Endowment Fund for Prophetic Ministries with Duke University Divinity School in 2000 to assist the education of students for an informed Christian activism that moves beyond social service and confronts both system and prejudices for constructive change.*

Among United Methodist churches receiving cash awards are Good Shepherd, Durham (1991), Sandhills Circuit, Eagle Springs (1994), Smyrna, Robbins (1996), Reconcili-

ation, Durham (1997), Aventura, Raleigh (1998), Jenkins Memorial, Raleigh; Cokesbury, Raleigh; All God's Children, Aulander; Grace, Burlington; Ashpole Center, Pembroke; Jerusalem, Maxton; St. Peter, Oxford (2000); Grace, Burlington; Hinton Rural Life Center, Hayesville; Calvary, Durham (2001), Faith, New Bern (2002), Reconciliation, Durham; Solid Rock, Olivia (2003), Oleander, Wilmington; Queen Street, Kinston; Cristo Vive, Durham (2007); Cokesbury, Fuquay-Varina; The Wesley Fellowship, Duke University; Aventura, Raleigh; Fairmont, Raleigh (2008).

With an initial investment of \$10,000, the fund has distributed over \$14,000 and will continue to make grants through the NC Conference Board of Church and Society.

\* The Rev. Steve Hickie is pastor of Fairmont UMC in Raleigh.

## Wesleyan receives \$10K grant for library project

NC Wesleyan College recently received a grant of \$10,000 from the DeLeon Carter Foundation to support the expansion and renovation of the college's Elizabeth Braswell Pearsall Library.

The \$4 million project, which is expected to be completed during Wesleyan's spring semester, will nearly double the size of the existing library facility.

The addition will provide increased seating, a new high-tech instructional lab, a media and special collections area, an Internet café, and various other areas for study and research.

"The gift demonstrates the DeLeon Foundation's dedication to higher

education and to the betterment of our community and region. We sincerely appreciate the DeLeon Carter Foundation's interest in helping Wesleyan improve the College's learning environment. Expansion of the library will benefit our campus as well as our community," said Malcolm W.

Woodall, the college's Vice President of Development.

The DeLeon Carter Foundation was established in 1988 by the late Myrtle Carter Henry, daughter of prominent Nash County farmer DeLeon Carter and heir to the family business, Carter Farms.



Gus Tulloss, Chairman of the DeLeon Carter Foundation, second from right, shakes hands with Wesleyan Interim President Dr. Stanley Caine as he presents a check for \$10,000 from the foundation. Also present were, left to right, George Whitaker, trustee of the foundation; Mayo Boddie, vice chair; Malcolm Woodall, Wesleyan's vice president of development; and at right, Billy Baker, DeLeon Carter Foundation board member. (Photo by Garry Hodges)

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## United Methodists seek to 'turn worlds upside down'

By Jeanette Pinkston  
and Erik Alsgaard\*

What happens when nearly 14 million United Methodists around

the world focus on a single idea with four "themes"?

Denominational leaders pray that in the next four years transformations will take place — around the

corner and around the world.

The four areas of focus adopted by the 2008 General Conference, the denomination's top legislative body, were rolled out in earnest at the quadrennial training event for annual conference leaders Jan. 29-Feb. 1 in Jacksonville, FL.

More than 1,200 leaders gathered for the "Living the United Methodist Way: Turning Worlds Upside Down" event to learn how their places of ministry can connect with others to transform themselves and the world.

Susan Ruach, chair of the design team and staff member at the UM Board of Discipleship, said the event's goal was to give participants "the big picture" of the four areas of focus, which are the centerpiece of the denomination's ministry for the next four to eight years.

"My prayer, my hope, has been that

this event will really help us as The United Methodist Church to come together and move forward in God's vision," she said.

The four areas — leadership development, church growth, ministry with the poor and global health — were introduced in plenary sessions, followed by workshops on each topic.

Texas Bishop Janice Riggle Huie illustrated how the emphasis was formed through intense Bible study, prayer and conversation, and she invited the leaders to "move out...of our little boxes" and follow "where we believe the Spirit is calling us." If the church did that, she said, United Methodism would once again become a movement.

Held every four years, the quadrennial training event is jointly

See "Quadrennial training," page 5



ABOVE (L-R): At a presentation during the "Living the United Methodist Way: Turning Worlds Upside Down" conference, Annie Fairley, chair of Conference Monitoring and Accountability, takes notes. Next to Fairley is LaNella Smith, Board of Laity member; obscured behind them is Marcus Singleton, member of the Connectional Table and representing the Strengthening the Black Church Team.



LEFT (L-R): Carol Goehring, executive director of Conference Connectional Ministries, discusses a plenary session topic. To her right are Melba McCallum, Board of Laity member and Trish Archer, leader of the Connectional Table Leadership Team.

(Photos by Bill Norton)

## Eslinger to serve as '09 Annual Conference director of music

By Bill Norton \*

Elise S. Eslinger, a church musician since age 14 and a founding member of the Upper Room Academy for Spiritual Formation, will be the music director for the 2009 NC Annual Conference. Other changes and reminders were recently announced following the meeting of the Annual Conference Program Planning Committee.

Eslinger is working with the Worship Committee and visited the site of the conference.

The conference is June 10-13 in the Greenville Convention Center. "A Future with Hope" is the four-year conference theme. Each year will have a special focus that will be added to the theme. For the 2009 Annual Conference, the full theme is "A Future with Hope: Learning as Christian Disciples."

Eslinger has a B.A. in music from Millsaps College and a Masters of Theological Studies from St. Meinrad School of Theology. While on the worship staff of the General Board of Discipleship, she provided editorial coordination or contribution to the publication of music resources, including the *Songs of Zion*, *Psalms for Singing*, and *Songs of Shalom*.

She served as the compiler and editor for the Upper Room *Worshipbook* released in 2006, now in its third printing, and its "Accompaniment and Worship Leader" edition released in 2007.

Eslinger was the founding director of the Institute for Applied Theology at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. Currently she is working on a Doctor of Ministry degree. She and her husband, Richard Eslinger, academic dean at UTS, frequently work together as lecturers, retreat leaders, and consultants in many aspects of worship, music, and spiritual formation.

See "Annual Conference," page 13



Elise Eslinger

### New NCC Web site goes live

Visit [www.nccumc.org](http://www.nccumc.org) to see the new look and organization of the NC Conference Web site. The site is still under transition as some sections of the earlier site are converted to work in the new environment. More details will be included in the April edition.





# Radical hospitality ministry for special needs teens and young adults flourishes every month at Wesley Memorial UMC

Wesley Memorial UMC in the Wilmington District holds inclusive gatherings every month for teens and young adults with and without disabilities.

These gatherings create a place where disabled young people, their friends, and their families can meet for food, fun, and fellowship.

The inclusive gatherings are held

on Friday nights and include activities such as Guitar Hero, Wii, big screen movies, dancing, beach-ball volleyball, pool, and arts and crafts.

Refreshments are always available and each session is ended with a time of music and prayer.

Attendees come from throughout the region and from all segments of the population, making this the most inclusive and racially integrated ministry of the church.

"There is nothing else like this available in the community," said Dr. Bill Parker, one of the coordinators of the project. "We have people of all different backgrounds coming and we have some that come from 40 miles away to experience this."

Attendance at the gatherings has been as high as 125, but averages about 65-70.

The gatherings were begun by Nathan Hansen, a member of the church's Boy Scout troop, who has a sister with special needs.

Nathan was looking for an Eagle Scout project when he had the idea of developing a place for people like his sister to have fellowship. After visiting a similar gathering in the Raleigh area, Nathan brought the idea home and found a receptive ear at Wesley Memorial.

This ministry gives the church a unique opportunity to reach out to the special needs community.

"We want all barriers down," said Francis Daniel, senior pastor at Wesley Memorial. "And we want all people to know they are loved and accepted here."



Betty Curtis, Music Director at Wesley Memorial, leads a session of African drumming. Playing rhythm instruments gives everyone a chance to make music together.



Sharing a moment of joy at a recent gathering.

## IT'S A PIG PICKIN'

Wednesday • June 10th • 5:30-7:30 p.m.  
Cypress Glen Retirement Community  
100 Hickory Street • Greenville, N.C.

Meet the Directors!  
MAP AND DETAILS ON BACK

The Communities of The United Methodist Retirement Homes:  
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Wesley Pines (Lumberton) • Wesley Ridge (Lumberton)  
Quail Haven Village (Pinehurst)

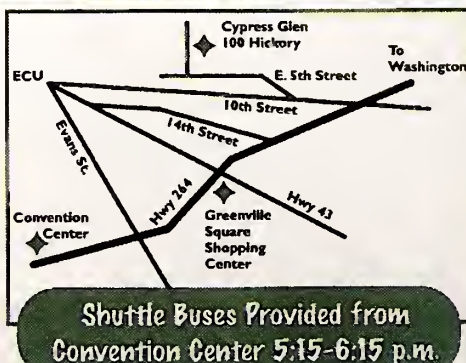
INVITE YOU TO A HOMETOWN PIG PICKIN'  
RSVP by May 30: (919) 384-3005 or 3006

## Welcome Delegates & Friends!

### Instructions from the Convention Center:

1. Take Highway 264 East.
2. You will cross over Evans Street, Highway 43 and 14th Street.
3. Turn left at 10th Street. Go about two blocks and bear to the right onto 5th Street. Note: This street can be easily missed.
4. Keep on 5th Street until you see Hickory Street. There is a highway sign for Cypress Glen in front of Coats Wahl School.
5. Turn Right onto Hickory Street and you are there.

Takes about 12 minutes from the Convention Center.



Shuttle Buses Provided from  
Convention Center 5:15-6:15 p.m.



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## Workshop offers ecumenical training

United Methodists interested in broadening their understanding of ecumenical cooperation are invited to attend special training sessions in Phoenix, AZ. The sessions are part of the National Workshop on Christian Unity, April 27-30.

This is the first time that specific United Methodist programming is being offered. The workshop, sponsored by the National Association of Ecumenical Officers, is marking its 42nd year. For details, visit the workshop's Web site at [www.nwcu.org](http://www.nwcu.org).

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# Harris is new director of Camp and Retreat Ministries

By Dail Ballard \*

Robert J. Harris, III, better known as Bobby, is the new executive director of NC United Methodist Camp & Retreat Ministries, Inc.

Harris is a familiar face within the camping industry having served as an assistant director and camp director at Camp Seafarer and Camp Silver Beach respectively.

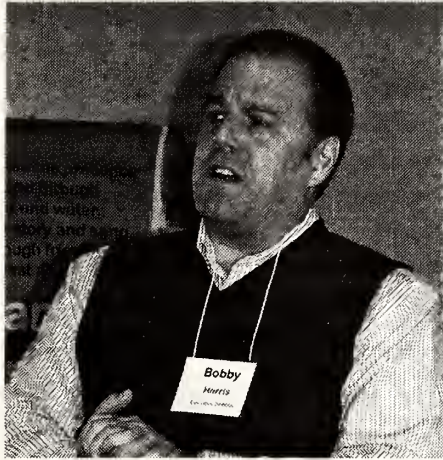
He also served on the board of the NC United Methodist Camp & Retreat Ministries in 1997.

Most recently, Harris served as senior director for the Association Programs of the YMCA, including the Y-Guides program which serves over 10,000 participants. He is a life-

long United Methodist.

He began his work with Camp & Retreat Ministries on January 6.

"It's a new day," Harris said as he



Bobby Harris

began overseeing general operations of the three camp sites, Chestnut Ridge, Don Lee and Rockfish.

Since his arrival, Harris' schedule has been filled with visits to the camps as well as getting acclimated in the Fuquay-Varina main office for Camp & Retreat Ministries and introducing himself within and among the various NC Conference committees.

Harris lives in Smithfield with his wife, Melissa and their two daughters.

In his spare time, Bobby reports

that he spends most of his time "chasing his two teenage daughters."

He loves the coast and all the activities associated with fishing and boating. He also enjoys running and has participated in half-marathons.

For information about activities at the camp and retreat centers, visit: [www.campchestnutridge.org](http://www.campchestnutridge.org); [www.donleecenter.org](http://www.donleecenter.org); or [www.rockfishoutdoorcenter.org](http://www.rockfishoutdoorcenter.org).

\* Dail Ballard is director of development for NCUM Camp and Retreat Ministries, Inc.

## Asbury Temple in Durham awarded \$12K grant to find the next generation of leaders

Asbury Temple UMC in Durham is one of eight congregations receiving a grant to tap the imagination of congregations in finding the next generation of leaders for the church and society.

Asbury Temple received a \$12,000 grant for "Leading Change: the Harriet Strong Wright Leadership Initiative for Young Women and the Norman Hanner Leadership

Initiative for Young Men."

This initiative seeks to impact church and community through mentoring, service, study, dialogue and reflection on the call to ministry with youth in high-risk neighborhoods in Durham.

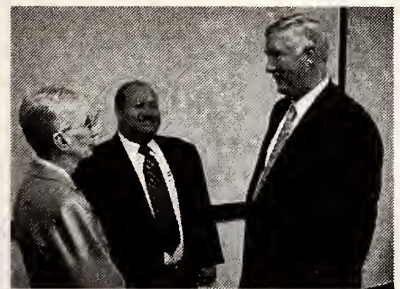
Young people will explore how they may be leaders in the church as well

See "Asbury Temple," page 6

## Oleander UMC forms alliance to develop ESL learning center



Families from a Southport Latino congregation came to a recent open house of a video and audio computer learning center for those learning to speak English as a Second language. The 12-station learning center is a partnership of the Oleander UMC and Affordable Computer Help, Inc.



(L-R) The Rev. Linda Taylor, pastor of Oleander UMC, Wilmington, speaks with corporate partner Michael S. George, president of Affordable Computer Help, Inc. and District Superintendent Powell Osteen at an open house for the learning center.



These three brothers living in the Wilmington area first began traditional ESL instruction at Oleander UMC. Now they are learning English through the new computer learning center with a full-immersion software system of video and audio.

By Dick Brasie \*

Oleander UMC in Wilmington, has formed an alliance with Affordable Computer Help, Inc. to launch a faith-based and corporate computer learning center for Spanish-speaking people to learn English as a Second Language (ESL).

Oleander Pastor Linda Taylor collaborated with Michael S. George, president of Affordable Computer Help to obtain a grant from the Duke Endowment for a 12-station computer laboratory featuring Rosetta Stone software with self-directed video and audio instruction for people to learn to communicate in English.

"This is the way of the future for all learning," Taylor said. "This will be the style of learning in the 21st century."

In 2005, Oleander UMC first received support from The Duke Endowment to begin traditional ESL classroom instruction.

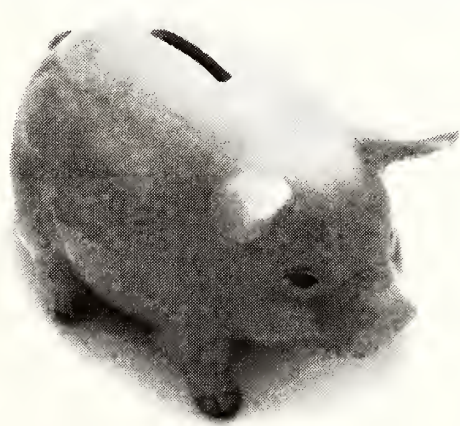
Taylor and George took the church and corporate program to District Superintendent Powell Osteen who, along with The Duke Endowment, endorsed the new education program for the community.

Osteen observed as the program was launched "it is nice to see good things happening."

In addition to the ESL program, Affordable Computer Help is offering members of the Oleander congregation greatly reduced fees to teach new PC users how to utilize basic software systems for word processing, graphics and other functions.

\* Dick Brasie is Pastor/Parish Relations Committee chair and media volunteer at Oleander UMC.

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## Marva Dawn to address NCC clergy

By Paul Stallsworth \*

Dr. Marva J. Dawn, considered by many ministers to be one of the most theologically engaging leaders in American Christianity today, will address the clergy of the NC Conference on Monday, April 27, at Jarvis Memorial UMC in Greenville.



Dr. Marva J. Dawn

The event will begin at 9:30 a.m. and conclude at 2:30 p.m. Sponsored by the Order of Elders, the Order of Deacons, and the Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members, all elders, deacons, and local pastors of the conference are encouraged to attend this event.

The theme for the day is "Pastoral Ministry: Our Life Together." It will address challenges, joys, and temptations found in pastoral ministry today; and it will call for a covenantal response from all the clergy present. The day will begin with Holy Communion, and move to Dr. Dawn's presen-

tation, a meal and some table talk, followed by a question and answer time moderated by Bishop Al Gwinn.

Dr. Dawn is author of books and articles including: *The Unnecessary Pastor: Rediscovering the Call* (co-written with Eugene Peterson, Eerdmans, 1999), *Powers, Weakness, and the Tabernacled of*

*God* (Eerdmans, 2001), *Unfettered Hope: A Call to Faithful Living in an Affluent Society* (Westminster John Knox, 2003), and *The Sense of the Call: A Sabbath Way of Life for Those Who Serve God, the Church, and the World* (Eerdmans, 2006).

She is also a speaker throughout the United States and beyond, a teaching fellow at Regent College of Vancouver, BC, and a theologian-educator with Christians Equipped for Ministry (CEM).

\* The Rev. Paul Stallsworth is a member of the Order of Elders.

## Trauma healing training offered for churches as they receive returning military

JUSTPEACE, the UM General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, and the UM General Board of Discipleship are co-sponsoring an event April 1-2 at the Upper Room Denman Building of the United Methodist Center in Nashville, TN. This event will focus on "Trauma Healing - Preparing Churches to Receive Returning Military Personnel."

Speakers will include Shelly Rambo, Assistant Professor of Theology at Boston University School of Theology and Laura Bender, a United Methodist pastor and US Navy chaplain.

Participants will receive a draft of materials for local church leaders to assist them in a healing ministry with returning veterans with an eye to both their needs and the ability to address these needs.

Registration is available online. Participants are responsible for their own travel and lodging arrangements. The participation fee is \$100. Please make checks payable to JUSTPEACE and mail payments to JUSTPEACE, 100 Maryland Ave NE, Washington DC 20002.

## Methodist University releases new history book

Methodist University in Fayetteville released its first history book, *From Cotton Field to University: A History of Methodist University, 1956-2006*, in early March.

Written by University Historian William H. "Bill" Billings, a 1968 graduate of Methodist, the hard cover book contains 642 pages of annotated history, 250 photographs, 92 pages of appendices, and an every-name index, for a total of 788

pages. Billings began work on the project in 2002.

"I am delighted that we now have a detailed history of our school," said Dr. M. Elton Hendricks, university president. "Our first 50 years were difficult at times, but the journey from a cotton field to a university was clearly worth taking."

"When I asked Bill to take on this project," said Dr. Hendricks, "I lent him histories of other colleges

and universities from my personal library. He was also given access to college trustees' minutes, transcripts of oral history interviews, and all the archives housed in the college library, including student publications. I think the history he has written is thorough, scholarly, and interesting."

Billings worked one year full-time on the history and five years half-time (20 hours per week).

He describes the project as "overwhelming at times" because of the large volume of material he encountered. "Our library has excellent archives," said Billings, "including 100,000 images dating back fifty years. It helped a great deal that I had worked here for 15 years and attended Methodist College from 1964-68. I was an eyewitness to 20 of our first 50 years."

The author said six years of research and writing led him to four conclusions about Methodist College/Methodist University:

1. Fayetteville was an ideal place to build a college.
2. The pioneers who built

Methodist had a clear vision of what a Christian liberal arts college should be and worked hard to make that vision a reality.

3. Methodist College/University staff, students, and alumni have distinguished themselves in many fields.

4. President M. Elton Hendricks has found niche markets for Methodist and extremely talented personnel who have enabled the school to grow and prosper and become a small university.

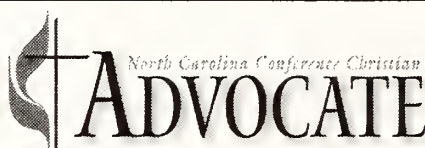
Billings is preparing a 30-minute "book talk" for presentation to area churches and civic groups interested in the history of the University.

To schedule a "book talk" or for more information, please contact the author weekday mornings at (910) 630-7509 or weekday afternoons at (910) 630-7032.

Copies of *From Cotton Field to University* may be purchased in the Methodist University Bookstore for \$22.95 or ordered online at [www.methodist.edu/alumni](http://www.methodist.edu/alumni).



Bill Billings



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**Contact:** [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org) or (919) 832-9560 with any questions.

### Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org).

Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

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## Quadrennial training from page 1

planned by the boards of Church and Society, Communications, Discipleship, Pension and Health Benefits, Global Ministries, Higher Education and Ministry, Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, Religion and Race, Status and Role of Women, United Methodist Men, Publishing House, Finance and Administration and annual conference leaders.

### Leadership

Florida Bishop Tim Whitaker showed how Methodism's John and Charles Wesley articulated a clear theological vision that said that the living God is acting in history for our sake; that transforming the whole creation starts with transforming the individual; and that a theological vision without a community in which to live it out is no good.

Jay Williams, a 27-year-old seminarian from New York, offered his thoughts on developing church leaders. He stated three theses on living the United Methodist Way.

"First, death is not always a bad thing," he said. "It's time to let deadly practices die. Some of our churches have been struggling to die for decades.

"Second, our primary task is to be a Christian, not United Methodist," he said. "Too many of us can talk about strategic plans but too few of us can give a witness. Too many of us know the *Book of Discipline* and the rules of polity, but not the *Bible*."

And the third thesis, he said, is that in order to lead, one must follow. The church needs to develop a culture of apprentices and followers of leaders.

### New places for new faces

The Rev. Thomas Butcher, executive officer of New Church Starts and coordinator of Path1 at the Board of Discipleship, said, "Starting new churches is the most effective evangelism tool we have. We want to get to the point where we are starting one new church every day."

The Path1 team is charged with recruiting, training and providing resources for 1,000 new church planters to start 650 churches in the next four years. One-half of those churches are targeted to be racial/ethnic congregations.

The Rev. Bener Agtarap, new church system strategist for the Board of Discipleship, asked, "What if every annual conference had a policy that every local church had a mission to start a new church?"

### Ministry with the poor

The Rev. Ed Paup, top executive of the Board of Global Ministries, told participants that "it cannot be busi-

ness as usual if we make ministry to and with the poor a priority."

While many United Methodists are not poor, he reminded listeners that "more than 80 percent of humanity lives on less than \$10 a day."

The church can do three things, he said: listen to the poor themselves, not just to the statistics; accept the poor—which implies seeing them and acknowledging that they exist; and serve the poor—responding to needs, spiritual and physical.

Noting that The United Methodist Church has hundreds of effective ministries with the poor in place, Paup said that the church is "neither without model or practitioner."

"If we do this in a way that I believe God calls us, we will see a renewal in the Church and a new sense of relevancy in the world," Paup said. "The transformation will take place individually, then in our congregations, and then in our conferences."

### Global health

From the beginning of the Methodist movement, John Wesley recognized the correlation between poverty and health. One of his first ministries was a health clinic for the poor.

The Rev. Gary Gunderson, senior vice president for Health and Welfare Ministries for Methodist Healthcare in Memphis, Tenn., sounded a hopeful note. "We have science to drastically reduce, if not eliminate, the worst offenses of justice and poverty globally," he said.

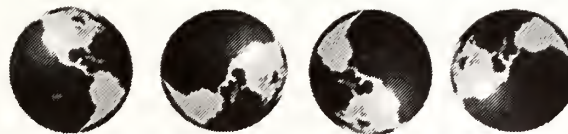
Dr. Cherian Thomas, a physician who is executive secretary for the Hospital Revitalization Program of the Board of Global Ministries, said that issues of poverty and global health require partnerships.

"We have to train people in sub-Saharan Africa and south Asia. We have to have people to move forward," he said. "We need to develop programs as well as people. It's not money we need, it's ideas and investment in people. This is my dream for today and for years to come."

The Rev. Gary Henderson, executive director of the Global Health Initiative for The United Methodist Church, challenged the participants to provide a "healing ointment" to the world.

"If we are going to turn the world upside down, this will require resurrection faith," he said. "We hope that the clear ministry areas of focus would ignite a passion in you...a resurrection faith."

\* Jeannette Pinkston is director of media relations for the United Methodist Board of Discipleship in Nashville, Tenn. Alsgaard is director of communications for the Florida Conference in Lakeland, Fla.



## Living the United Methodist Way: Turning Worlds Upside Down Four Areas of Focus

- 1. Developing principled Christian leaders for the church and the world.** The church must recruit young people for ministry and provide them with the skills to be effective in this new time of opportunity. Similarly, we must offer leadership training for lay people who are in ministry in countless ways.
- 2. Creating new places for new people by starting new congregations and renewing existing ones.** To remain faithful to our commitment to transform the world, we reach out with genuine hospitality to people wherever they are. We start new faith communities, seek to renew existing ones and inspire faithful discipleship.
- 3. Engaging in ministry with the poor.** As an expression of our discipleship, United Methodists seek to alleviate conditions that undermine quality of life and limit the opportunity to flourish as we believe God intends for all. As with John Wesley, we seek to change conditions that are unjust, alienating and disempowering.
- 4. Stamping out killer diseases by improving health globally.** Conditions of poverty cause illness and death. The lack of access to doctors, nurses, medications and appropriate facilities is deadly, especially among those who live in conditions of poverty. The people of The United Methodist Church can play a significant role in educating others about diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria, and treating and preventing their devastating effects.

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## Whaley honored for service to UMF

The Board of Directors of the United Methodist Foundation, Inc., along with its 830 investment partners throughout the NC Conference, honored L. Milton Whaley for 18 years of service to the stewardship ministry of the foundation during the board's February meeting. Whaley served as president of the foundation from 1996-2003. Shown (L-R) are W. Daniel Pate, board president; Milton Whaley, and Lynn James, UMF's executive director. During his presidency, Whaley oversaw the restructuring of the foundation's corporate board into a smaller, more workable entity and focused the board's attention on both immediate issues and long-term goals. "His leadership was marked by his gracious courtesy which he extended to all, helping the foundation earn the respect and esteem of its constituent churches, agencies and institutions of the North Carolina Conference and the Conference itself," notes the resolution adopted by the board in appreciation of Whaley's service. (Photo by Bill Norton)



### United Methodist Foundation, Inc.

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### RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION OF LLOYD MILTON WHALEY

**WHEREAS**, Lloyd Milton Whaley has served with distinction as a member of the Board of Directors of the United Methodist Foundation, Inc. since 1991, completing six successive three-year terms; and

**WHEREAS**, Lloyd Milton Whaley served as president of the United Methodist Foundation, Inc. for seven years from 1996 to 2003 during which time he led the Foundation with remarkable clarity of purpose and effectiveness; and

**WHEREAS**, during his presidency, Lloyd Milton Whaley saw the critical need to restructure the Board into a smaller, more workable entity and focused the Board's attention on this issue until successfully completed; and

**WHEREAS**, Lloyd Milton Whaley has generously given the highest quality of service to the Foundation, marked by his gracious courtesy which he extended to us all; and

**WHEREAS**, Lloyd Milton Whaley's leadership helped the Foundation earn the respect and esteem of its constituent churches, agencies and institutions of the North Carolina Conference and the Conference itself; and

**WHEREAS**, Lloyd Milton Whaley provided extraordinary support to the Executive Director and staff of the United Methodist Foundation during a period of transition.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Directors of the United Methodist Foundation, Inc. does hereby publically acknowledge to Lloyd Milton Whaley its deep appreciation for his strong, effective and unselfish service to the Foundation; its appreciation for his outstanding achievements during his 18 years of service; its hope that it may continue to count on his friendship, counsel and support in the future; and its best wishes for satisfaction and fulfillment in his future activities and expresses to him its debt for his service and dedication to the United Methodist Foundation, Inc.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this resolution be spread upon the permanent minutes of the Foundation and that copies be presented to Lloyd Milton Whaley and shared throughout the North Carolina Conference.

**UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED** by the Board of Directors of the United Methodist Foundation, Inc. this 11th day of February, 2009.

W. Daniel Pate, President  
Board of Directors  
United Methodist Foundation, Inc.

Reginald W. Ponder, Secretary  
Board of Directors  
United Methodist Foundation, Inc.

## Asbury Temple UMC awarded grant continued from page 3

as leaders in the world for the church.

Nearly \$98,000 in new "Cultures of Call" grants were awarded from the Fund for Theological Education (FTE) to equip churches and church-related organizations to play a leading role in the vocational discernment of young men and women. The grants also seek to increase the number of gifted young people considering ordained ministry as a profession.

FTE launched the grant program with funding from Lilly Endowment, Inc. in 2007 and will award a

total of \$350,000 in "Cultures of Call" grants through 2009.

The grants support projects that: focus on youth and young adults in a local context, without isolating them from the rest of the community; foster new efforts to the call to ministry; offer engagement over a significant period of time; involve participants—project planners, leaders and young people—in consistent theological reflection.

For more information about Cultures of Call grants, visit [www.the-fund.org/programs/calling](http://www.the-fund.org/programs/calling).



## Edgecombe Parish's 7th annual "Walk with Jesus" event on April 10

On Friday April 10 at 8pm, Edgecombe Parish: Pinetops and Temperance Hall Churches, pastored by Kris Williams, in Edgecombe County is presenting the seventh "Walk with Jesus" event at Rest-a-Bit Farm three miles east of Tarboro. Admission is free. During the event, the farm is transformed into the city of Jerusalem, with Palestinian-clad guides leading visitors along a winding, one-mile pathway lined with more than 1,000 luminaries.

Thirteen colorful scenes depicting significant events of Jesus' last week on earth are presented throughout the walk, with Scripture readings at each station. More than 100 cast members (children and adults), participate in portraying the loving sacrifice of the Lord from His grand entry into Jerusalem, to His Crucifixion between two criminals, to His burial in the tomb. Live animals are featured in many of these scenes.

The walk ends at a lake where walkers will be seated to listen to musical renditions awaiting the final resurrection scene. Trams are provided for those unable to walk. Call the church office at 252-827-1874 or see [www.pinetopsumc.org](http://www.pinetopsumc.org) for more information and directions. Rain date for the event is April 11.

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# OPENING DOORS. CHANGING THE WORLD.

UNITED METHODIST SPECIAL SUNDAYS

## It's all about Hope.

It's a word we've heard a lot in the past year. And it's a word we need to hear even more this year.

In the midst of a turbulent economy, people are being shaken to the very core. For many of us, the loss of a job is not just the loss of an income, but the loss of self and purpose. And the loss of a home – is anything scarier than that?

Has the world ever needed the church more? Has the message of Jesus that God is able to care for every need ever been more relevant than today?

We United Methodists are in the hope business, you know. That's right. Locally and globally, we give hope. To children who are victims of malaria-infected mosquitoes; to students who need a little help to make their college costs; to the young mother who needs daycare for her child and English lessons so she can get a better paying job. The list goes on and on, far too many to list here.

We have been in the hope business a long time. Through economic upturns and down turns, through floods and fires and famine, through war and peace, we have been there. The people of The United Methodist Church. The people of hope.

So don't give up now. Don't get scared, don't run from the challenge. Keep the hope coming. Let this be hope's finest hour.

— By Dr. Ken Sloane, Director of Communications Ministry, United Methodist Communications; From the Connectional Giving Blog of The United Methodist Church at [connectionalgiving.blogspot.com](http://connectionalgiving.blogspot.com).

## Church-wide Special Sundays

**CHURCH-WIDE SPECIAL SUNDAYS** with offerings allow United Methodists across the globe to offer refuge in times of disaster, promote peace and justice, provide scholarships and student loans, reach out to the community, teach skills to encourage self-sufficiency and share the love of Jesus Christ with God's people everywhere.

† **ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING** (fourth Sunday in Lent) enables the United Methodist Committee on Relief to reach out through worldwide ministries of food, shelter, health and peace. One Great Hour of Sharing: March 22, 2009

† **NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES SUNDAY** (third Sunday of Easter) nurtures mission with Native Americans and provides scholarships for UM Native American seminarians. Native American Ministries Sunday: April 26, 2009

† **PEACE WITH JUSTICE SUNDAY** (first Sunday after Pentecost) enables The United Methodist Church to have a voice in advocating for peace and justice through a broad spectrum of global programs. Peace with Justice Sunday: June 7, 2009

† **WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY** (first Sunday of October) provides scholarships for U.S. (racial- and ethnic-minority) students and international stu-

dents, on both undergraduate and graduate levels. World Communion Sunday: October 4, 2009

† **UNITED METHODIST STUDENT DAY** (last Sunday of November) furnishes scholarships and loans for students attending United Methodist-related and other accredited colleges and universities. United Methodist Student Day - November 29, 2009

† **HUMAN RELATIONS DAY** (Sunday before the national observance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday) strengthens United Methodist outreach to communities in the United States and Puerto Rico, encouraging social justice and work with at-risk youth. Human Relations Day - January 17, 2010

**ORDER FREE RESOURCES ONLINE** at <http://secure.umcom.org/store/catalog/Special-Sundays,28.aspx>

**In This Issue:** Resources for One Great Hour of Sharing, Native American Ministries Sunday, and Peace with Justice Sunday. Resources for the other three Special Sundays will be featured in an upcoming edition of the *Advocate*.





## One Great Hour of Sharing

**March 22, 2009**

*"For you have been a refuge to the poor,  
a refuge to the needy in their distress, a shelter from  
the rainstorm and a shade from the heat." Isaiah 25:4 NRSV*

Necessities of life include food, shelter and clothing. However, many people around the world lack these basic necessities. The One Great Hour of Sharing offering makes those necessities a reality by sharing a beacon of hope with those who hurt.

"Being a beacon of hope can include supplying food to famine-stricken people, providing medicine to an AIDS clinic in Africa and furnishing lumber in hurricane-devastated areas. Together we can make a difference through the One Great Hour of Sharing offering," said the Rev. Sam Dixon, Deputy General Secretary of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and NC Conference Elder.

"The One Great Hour of Sharing offering provides for those basic needs that make the rest of UMCOR's work possible," says Dixon. "Without this offering, so much of what UMCOR does to bring hope and healing to the world could not happen."

When a catastrophe occurs, offerings to One Great of Sharing enable UMCOR to reach out and ease the pain and suffering by providing humanitarian aid of food, shelter, health and peace.

Giving to One Great Hour of Sharing means that UMCOR can keep the promise that 100 percent of designated gifts go to the specific causes. Unlike other mission programs, UMCOR receives no World Service or other apportionment money. This is why faithful support of the One Great Hour of Sharing offering is crucial.

Continue to share God's love with those in need by giving to One Great Hour of Sharing. God calls Christians to be the hands, heart and hope of the church for people who are suffering. Through the One Great Hour of Sharing, the church is able to answer that call.

Give to one Great Hour of Sharing. Be there. Be hope.

**For more information visit [www.umciving.org/oghs](http://www.umciving.org/oghs)**

## One Great Hour of Sharing: Schools Provide Hope

### ***In Louisiana: Someplace to go***



For more than two years, teenager Shana Legnon has lived in a trailer park with eight people. The view from her living-room window is sparse. No trees. No place to play. Just rows and rows of trailers.

"Thank God for school," she said. "It gives me some place to go all day."

Shana is one of many who call the transitional living community of St. Tammany Parish home. Located on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain, outside New Orleans, the community suffered extensive wind and water damage from Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The two trailer communities, with 550 total units, lacked facilities for community activities, playgrounds and parks.

But thanks to Northshore Disaster Recovery Inc. (NDRI), an organization funded by the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), two community centers now give children and teens a safe place to learn and have fun.

NDRI purchased and leased two mobile homes to house the community centers. The centers are stocked with supplies. NDRI coordinates activities, including after-school programs, tutoring by high school students, counseling and Bible school programs by church groups.

NDRI director Dale Kimball believes long-term recovery is about more than rebuilding homes: "We want to rebuild the whole community."

### ***In South Africa: Word of mouth brings refuge***

UMCOR is a major contributor to the ministry of Central Methodist Mission including its refugee ministries working with children like Chuma\*\*, a 13 year-old boy from Zimbabwe who fled his country's famine and violence—seeking refuge in South Africa.

The Albert Street Refugee School, a program of Central Methodist Mission and part of the Albert Street Methodist Church, is serving refugee children primarily from Zimbabwe, but also from Mozambique, Malawi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The school gives them new hope for a better life through education and trauma counseling, but also through meeting the daily needs of food, clothing and shelter. Children like Chuma live in an area separate from the adults at Central Methodist Mission and commute daily to the Albert Street Church where the Refugee School is located.

Many of the children at the school traveled alone to the central city of Johannesburg looking for safety and food. Some of the children helped one another find the Mission through word of mouth.

For instance, a boy would flee from his Zimbabwe home, make his way to the Limpopo River, and meet another boy who would tell him what he'd learned about safe passage into South Africa. A girl would be homeless on the streets of Johannesburg, meet another child who would direct her to the Mission.



In this way, the word spreads about Central Methodist Mission, the school and its services.

The conditions at Central Methodist Mission are less than ideal because of over-crowding, but it is the only alternative to living on the streets.

Refugees are subject to xenophobic attacks by South Africans, who are themselves struggling to survive. Only a small percentage of refugees applying for asylum are granted legal status. The rest wait for the right time to return home safely. Central Methodist Mission is their place of refuge.

In addition to the Albert Street School for the children, Ray of Hope Ministry offers preschool, infant care, legal aid, literacy classes and a free health clinic to arriving adult refugees.

The program provides food, diapers, clothes, and other basic supplies for infants whose mothers have no financial resources. The program also extends its medical services to help those in need and also helps cover the cost of expensive prescriptions.

\*\*Name has been changed.

*"God loves it when the giver delights in the giving. God can pour on the blessings in astonishing ways so that you're ready*





## Native American Ministries Sunday

**April 26, 2009**

Approximately 19,000 United Methodists identify themselves as Native American. About 225 United Methodist churches, fellowships, and ministries relate to this population. The state of North Carolina has the highest number of Native American ministries in the Southeastern Jurisdiction.

Native American Awareness Sunday recognizes and supports the contributions of Native Americans to the church and society. The observance, approved by the 1988 General Conference, is one of six special church-wide Sunday offerings.

The funds collected allow The United Methodist Church to partner with existing native ministries and create programs on behalf of Native Americans. Money collected also supports seminary scholarships for United Methodist Native Americans.

Fifty percent of the offering remains in the annual conference to develop and strengthen local Native American ministries. The conference committee on Native American ministry administers these funds. Many Native American churches have been blessed to receive grants for items such as hymnals, Bibles, children's ministries and handicap access renovation.

Many annual conferences use part of this special offering to fund their Committees on Native American Ministries (CONAM) which enable annual conferences to be active, engaged and responsive to Native American tribes, reservations, communities and families within their conference boundaries.

If a conference has no Native American Ministries, those funds are distributed equally between the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry to provide scholarships for American Indians attending the church's schools of theology and the Native American Urban Initiative of the General Board of Global Ministries.

According to *The Book of Discipline 2004* (Par. 653), "Every local church at charge conference shall designate by nomination and election a minimum of one person per charge (without regard to race or ethnic origin) or a designated member of an established church committee to represent the need for better awareness of Native American contributions in the local church."



**For more information visit [www.umcsgiving.org/nams](http://www.umcsgiving.org/nams)**

## Native American Ministries Sunday:

### Ministry tells the Lumberton community: 'You matter'

By Sylvia Collins \*

One of the newest ministries of Branch Street UMC, Lumberton is called "Beauty from Ashes." Funded in part by the special offering received on Native American Ministries Sunday, Beauty from Ashes reaches out to residents of the third-poorest county in the U.S.

Most persons served by this lay-driven, urban, Native American ministry live near the church, in low-income and substandard housing. Branch Street wants to be a congregation that is open and inclusive. They want to tell their neighbors, "You matter, and our church is not complete on Sunday mornings without you."

Most Branch Street members do not live in the community, so for them to make such a bold statement declares their commitment to being disciples of Jesus Christ for the world.

They went door to door, inviting people to church. The local housing authority staff said, "We have never had a church ask if they could be in ministry with us." Instead, "we are the ones out begging."

As a result of this new partnership, Branch Street has some new families at our church, all races, and they are excited that "someone cares about them."

The church partners with the local elementary school to assist needy families who move into the area. During the holidays the school provides a list of children who have particular needs, and the church tries to meet those needs.

Truly, God is using Branch Street to witness to those who desperately search for the love found in Jesus Christ, and Native American Ministries Sunday gifts—shared the second Sunday after Easter—make a big difference!

\* The Rev. Sylvia Collins-Ball is pastor of Branch Street UMC in Lumberton.



## Seminary scholarships

"I want to be the best minister I can be," said the Rev. Chebon Kernell, a Native American seminary scholarship recipient. "The best way to do this is through theological education. My hope is for my children to know who they are as Native people, to hold core values and to know it's OK for them to be what God created them to be." Already Kernell has served as director of interpretation and programs for the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference and as pastor of First American UMC, Norman, OK.

"Because of my scholarship [provided by the Native American Ministries Sunday offering], I did not have to worry about paying for tuition, books and other costs that hinder so many students. I could concentrate on my purpose for being there: to study and to become a better minister."

To be eligible for a scholarship, applicants must be a member of The United Methodist Church and have tribal affiliation.



## Mission programs

Supported in part through the special offering, the Native American United Methodist Gathering in Tempe, AZ, focuses on giving "children a spiritual message—and to help them maintain their culture. We try to give our children guidance and to be examples for them," the program coordinator explained. "As they become more involved in the church, their voices are heard."

for anything and everything, more than just ready to do what needs to be done." --2 Corinthians 9:7-8, *The Message*



## Peace with Justice Sunday:

### Solar Ovens Bring Safer Meals, Clean Water

Missionary Rick Jost found a simple way to make a difference — solar ovens.

"Motivation for what we do is the crushing poverty in Haiti," Rick said. "It brings many people to tears when they see how these people live." Peace with Justice Sunday witnesses to God's demand for a faithful, just, disarmed and secure world. Drinking dirty water and cooking over open fires — because one has no choice — are justice issues. By building and taking solar ovens to Haiti, Rick and other United Methodists help poor families pasteurize drinking water and cook healthy meals in a safe environment.

Four volunteers from North Carolina and three from South Dakota served on a Haiti mission team last November. With the aid of local people, 150 solar ovens were assembled on-site.

These solar ovens are not a hand-out. Although the folks served by the ministry cannot afford the full cost (US \$125.00) of a solar oven, a 2-day training seminar plus a training fee (US \$18.75 at current exchange rate) are prerequisites to receiving an oven. Some students will go the extra mile through active participation, but come up short when it's time to pay the fee.

Recently, an older, very determined, and obviously very poor man walked many hours and slept on the cement floor of the church to take part in one of the 2-day solar cooking seminars. He worked diligently on the solar oven assembly, as well as taking part in the cooking demonstrations and classroom lessons.

After his efforts and scrimping his meager pocket money, he did not have enough to pay the training fee. But he was provided with a solar oven to take

home to his family because he had earned it and because of the support provided through donations including Peace with Justice offerings.

Many seminar participants walked great distances in the aftermath of great suffering from four successive hurricanes/tropical storms that devastated Haiti during August and September. A group of 13 persons — spanning three generations — walked for 7 hours over the mountains from the other side of the southern peninsula of Haiti to attend this seminar.

Mission volunteers say that it is a humbling experience to witness that kind of desire for knowledge and determination to help their families.



The Rev. Butch Huffman, from the NC Conference, tacks a solar oven box to a frame with help from a Haitian boy.

### Teaching Peace Is Possible

"If you ask any child what kind of world they want to live in, they will say peaceful, safe, honest, respectful," said Conna Wilkinson, who directs the Peace Challenge Camp in Oklahoma City. Skyline Urban Ministries offers the camp to teach pre-teens how to make peace with themselves and others. "We teach what Jesus said and did so they know they have options for living a more happy and peaceful life," Wilkinson explained.

And they create an environment where children can begin to ferret out what contributions they can make.

The camp puts campers through team-building exercises. "Incredible things happen during these challenges," Wilkinson noted.

"We had a team of four boys who were working to figure out how they were all going to stay on a swinging balance beam for six seconds," she said. The smallest boy on the team fell off the end twice, and the beam swung back and hit him. "The team agreed it was more important to protect their team than to succeed

at the challenge, so their compassionate consensus was to stop."

Will lessons learned at peace camp endure real-world tests? "At the very least, children leave here knowing peace is possible," Wilkinson said.



— Adapted from *Interpreter* magazine, May/June 2007



## Peace with Justice Sunday

June 7, 2009

Established by the 1988 General Conference, Peace with Justice Sunday enables the denomination's voice in advocating for peace and justice at home and around the world. The day witnesses to God's demand for a faithful, just, disarmed and secure world.

Peace with Justice Sunday is a way people can give from a place of faith, according to Adrienne Fong, Peace with Justice coordinator, California-Nevada Conference. "I know there are many times people give to non-faith organizations that do human rights, peace and environmental justice work, but if they knew they could give from within the church," she emphasized, "I think they would. It makes me really proud to be United Methodist because we address so many issues through the Special Sunday offerings, especially Peace with Justice."

Half of the offerings collected are retained by the annual conference to fund local peace with justice programs. Half of the offering is remitted to the General Board of Church and Society to help fund U.S. and global work in social action, public-policy education and advocacy.

Peace with Justice Sunday gifts empower compassionate people to advocate for human rights, buy fair-trade products, care for the environment, demonstrate for important causes, eradicate poverty, feed the hungry, mediate conflict provide health care, seek affordable housing and model nonviolence. The Special Sunday offering funds global outreach through the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) and annual conference-related peace with justice ministries that transform lives.

This offering allows the Church to have a voice in advocating for peace and justice through a broad spectrum of global programs:

- The Ohio-based Faith Communities Uniting for Peace encourages Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, Muslims and Sikhs "to live from a vision of peace rooted in faith."

- In Liberia—in partnership with other religious and humanitarian groups, The United Methodist Church provides a place for former child soldiers to live, recreational activities to address war trauma, and necessities such as fresh drinking water and medical treatment.

The *Book of Discipline* calls for a peace with justice coordinator to be assigned by every annual conference to act as primary coordinator of Peace with Justice resources, interpretation and advocacy. The coordinator links local churches in the annual conference with the GBCS Peace with Justice Program. Peace with Justice Coordinators meet annually for spiritual growth, empowerment and program resourcing.

For more information visit [www.umcgiving.org/pwjs](http://www.umcgiving.org/pwjs)



## New Advance for Christ project Giving Resource Guide available

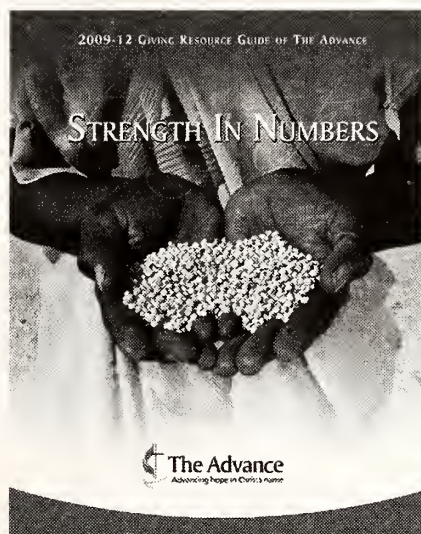
Almost a thousand projects and programs in 100 countries are included in the new Giving Resource Guide from The Advance, the United Methodist designated mission giving channel.

Subtitled *Strength in Numbers*, the 111-page guide, a magazine-style catalogue, lists approved recipients for the quadrennium, or four-year period, from 2009-2012. It also contains other information on mission support, such as how congregations can enter into Covenant Relationships with missionaries.

The Advance represents "second-mile" mission giving, the "first mile" being mission support included in World Service apportionments to congregations.

Some \$39 million is given in a typical year through The Advance for a wide range of mission projects, missionary support, disaster relief, and humanitarian service. Funds

for the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) go through The Advance, officially, "The Advance for Christ and His Church." One hundred percent of every Advance gift goes to the ministry designated by the donor. No administrative costs are taken from the contributions.



"We carefully reviewed hundreds upon hundreds of applicants for Advance designation," according to the Rev. Shawn Bakker, director of The Advance and an associate general secretary of the Gen. Board of Global Ministries. The Advance is part of the international mission agency.

The new giving guide is organized geographically, with a section devoted to general mission topics. It covers all regions of the world except Australia/New Zealand, Canada, and scattered parts of Western Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East. One can also search for projects by area, country, name, title, etc. on the online giving page.

"The contents of the print guide and the online database have been coordinated," said Bakker. "Donors can go online to get more comprehensive information on projects. They can contribute by several means, including credit card gifts online or

by telephone, by check directly to The Advance or through their congregations."

Both broad ministries, such as new congregation development, hunger, AIDS prevention/treatment, or specific projects can be supported through The Advance.

Almost all Advance causes and projects originate on local or regional levels as ministry priorities of those related to needs and possibilities.

Approval as "an Advance" does not guarantee funding. Project goals in the resource guide are just that – goals.

Persons needing the print guide for their work on congregation, conference, or institutional levels may obtain free single copies through UM Communications by visiting our online store or by calling 888-346-3862 and asking for item number 87400308. Other resources and materials related to The Advance are also available.

## Increased efforts by Society of St. Andrew at year-end feed many more of America's hungry

By Carol Breitingner \*

While U.S. and world economies were tanking and most nonprofit organizations were pulling back to guard against potential declines in donations, the Society of St. Andrew (Advance for Christ #801600) in Big Island, VA was stepping out on faith.

During the last four months of 2008, the national hunger relief ministry was able to increase the amount of food it distributed to critical feeding agencies around the nation at a time when their shelves were essentially bare.

In direct response to the escalating need faced by the nation's hungry and the agencies they reach out to for food, the Society of St. Andrew (SoSA) made a very hard push in the last few months of 2008.

Nationwide, 91% more food was

distributed by SoSA from Sept. through Dec. 2008 than during the same months in 2007 — from 3.7 million pounds in 2007 to nearly 7.1 million pounds in 2008.

Excess food gleaned in fields and orchards and from packing houses was up almost 25% from 2007. Bulk loads of potatoes and other produce salvaged through their Potato & Produce Project were up almost 8%.

Overall, pounds of food saved and distributed during 2008 were up nearly 16% — from 20.2 million pounds to 23.5 million. This food nourished hungry Americans with more than 70 million servings of fresh produce.

SoSA conducted over 3,200 gleaning and Potato Drop events throughout more than 20 states last year. Nearly 31,600 volunteers picked and bagged that food.

"All of this points to a very healthy ministry," said Mike Waldmann, SoSA's executive director. "In order to maintain this much-needed increased level of food salvage and distribution, we must depend on the generosity of our donors," said Waldmann.

"There's an abundance of food out there that, if not redirected to those in need, will go to waste. How much food SoSA can redirect to critical feeding agencies throughout the year is directly related to how much financial support we receive year in and year out. And since we can provide a serving of food for about two cents while keeping our overhead expenses well under ten percent, those who give can be certain their contributions will go further with SoSA than with just about any other organization," he added.

The Society of St. Andrew is a



Gleaning in a Florida corn field, helps of all ages can make a difference.

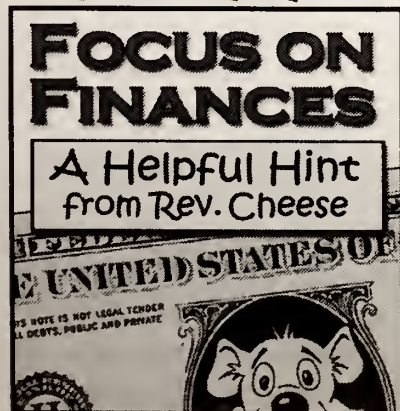
national, ecumenical ministry that gleans America's fields and feeds America's hungry.

It tackles the problem of food waste and hunger in America through its grassroots Gleaning Network, Potato & Produce Project, Harvest of Hope and Hunger Relief Advocate programs, which salvage fresh produce that will otherwise be wasted and donate it to feed the hungry. SoSA is one of the nation's largest nonprofit suppliers of fresh produce to the hungry.

For more information about the Society of St. Andrew and its hunger relief programs: call toll free 800-333-4597; e-mail: [sosausa@endhunger.org](mailto:sosausa@endhunger.org); website: [www.endhunger.org](http://www.endhunger.org).

\* Carol A. Breitingner is the communications director for the Society of St. Andrew.

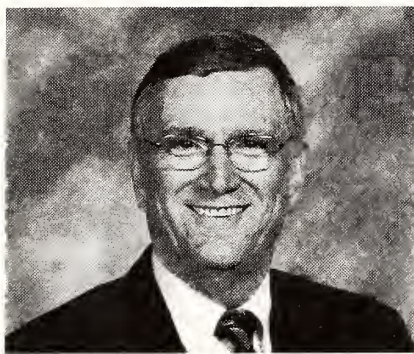
## Church Mice



Karl Zorowski

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By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

## April 5, 2009

**Text: Luke 23:32-46**

### "Suffering Unto Death"

This is the study text for Palm Sunday. Where is the cheering crowd throwing down palm branches? Where are those who shouted "Hosanna! Hosanna!" Where is the echo of celebration as Jesus rode into Jerusalem?

In recent years, students of church life have noticed that in some traditions, there is a temptation to jump directly from Palm Sunday to Easter, with no time set apart to reflect on the betrayal, the criminal prosecution, the painful scene of Good Friday. To balance the story, we have come to call this Sunday "Palm/Passion Sunday," an effort to capture both the "triumphal entry" into Jerusalem and the shattering death on the cross. This lesson is about the cross.

In Luke 23:34, Jesus prays "Father, forgive them" (but we are not sure who is included in the "them"). The

word that Luke chooses for "forgive" is *aphes*. That is the word that one might use if a balloon is being released. That is the word that one might use when leaving a room. That is a word that one might use to indicate that someone is exempt from taxation. That is a gift of freedom! There is power in that kind of forgiveness!

The custom at crucifixions was to post the crime for which the victim was being put to death. The sign over Jesus read: "This is the King of the Jews" (Luke 23:38). The strange thing is that Jesus was crucified for something that was true. In fact, if anything, the charge was understated. Not only is Jesus King of the Jews, Jesus is King of the universe! His executors underestimated who this was! (I cannot help but wonder if our efforts to make Jesus into "my best buddy" also make us guilty of underestimating who this Jesus is.)

The text closes (Luke 23:46) when Jesus "breathed his last." The biblical image of God's presence is often seen as God's breathing. Genesis 2:7 indicates that humankind got its life from the breath of God. ("...and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life,

and the man became a living being") Ezekiel 37:5 reminds us that death is overcome by the breath of God. ("...I will cause breath to enter you and you shall live." And now, in Luke, Jesus gives his final breath into the world. And thus we have the potential to live in Christ Jesus.

### What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Proclaiming the Scandal of the Cross* (Baker Books), Mark Baker quotes James Bronson who wrote: "(The message of the cross) suggests that God's work in our lives emerges in the most surprising and unexpected ways in the brokenness, the darkness, the loneliness of our lives."

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Simply to the cross I cling..."

## April 12, 2009

**Text: Luke 24:1-12**

### "Resurrected Unto New Life"

As I started working on this week's study, I noticed that the lesson falls on what would have been my mother's 106th birthday. She died when she was 88, but there is a special symmetry about Easter Sunday falling on her birthday. Isn't that the joyful claim of the faith: Easter is about a new birth to new life. Thanks be to God.

Resurrection is about ongoing life where there has been death. Contrast that with resuscitation that is about restoration to life only to die again. Resurrection is not about a little thread of life that never really dies. It is about death, kaput, nada, zilch, dead, dead, dead. Then life! That is probably why the lily and the butterfly are inadequate symbols of the resurrection; there is life in the lily bulb; there is life in the cocoon. These might represent transformation, but they do not represent death to life.

A French translation of the New Testament (*Bonnes Nouvelles Aujourd'hui*) has a solid way of expressing this resurrection theme of Luke 24:5: "*Il n'est pas ici; il est revenue à la vie.*" Translated: "He is not here; he has returned to life." Returned to life! Unless the resurrection is about real death being replaced by real life, it has little meaning.

One can hardly miss the role of women in spreading the news that Jesus is alive (Luke 24:10). Three of them are named and then there were "the other women with them." God has a sense of humor: in a culture

where women were often relegated to a second class citizenship, God gives to women the first awareness of the resurrected Lord. The disciples did not believe them (24:11), either because the proclaimers were women or because the story seemed so far-fetched. But Peter is intrigued enough with the possibility—maybe so eager to have a second chance to make it right with the Jesus whom he denied—that he rushes to the tomb to see for himself. (24:12). Finally, isn't that what happens to each of us: we hear the story from someone and then have to see it for ourselves.

The Easter story is to be told, both by the words of the Church and by the lives of the Church. Then, as happened with Peter, others come to the tomb and find it empty. Happy birthday, Mama Dear.

### What Someone Else Has Said:

W. D. Davies (*Invitation to the New Testament*, Doubleday) has written: "...the essential meaning of the resurrection is the renewal of the relationship, between Jesus and his disciples, that had been broken by his death."

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of new beginnings, in Jesus Christ we dare to claim new beginnings, even hope after despair, even victory after loss, even life after death..."

## April 19, 2009

**Text: Luke 24:36-53**

### "Witnesses to New Life"

After the resurrection of Jesus, the followers of the Lord certainly go through a range of emotions and attitudes. Terrified (Luke 24:5). Remembering (24:8). Disbelieving (24:11). Amazed (24:12). Foolish (24:25). Recognizing (24:31). Startled (24:36). Doubting (24:38). Wondering (24:41). Understanding (24:45). Worshipful (24:52). Joyful (24:52). Blessing (24:53).

Most of us can find ourselves somewhere in all of that! And it is to those with all these feelings and thoughts that the Lord says, "You will be clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). For me, that promise is a reminder that no matter where life's journey has put me, it is not beyond the reach of God's power.

Do you remember the Academy Award movie "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button"? It is the story of

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# Annual Conference updates *continued from page 1*

## Executive Sessions

The executive session for clergy will begin at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, June 10 in the Main Campus at Covenant UMC in Winterville, three miles from the convention center. The address is 4000 Corey Road, Winterville at the intersection with Fire Tower Road.

Registration for clergy will begin at 8 a.m. at Covenant's Main Campus. Packets remaining after the executive session will be taken to the Greenville Convention Center.

While clergy are meeting at Covenant, lay members begin their executive session at 10 a.m. in the Greenville Convention Center. Registration for laity begins at 8 a.m. in the convention center lobby.

"Additional space has been needed for both the clergy and lay executive sessions meeting at the convention center. The Program Planning Committee approved the change after Covenant invited the conference to meet in their new facility and several of the committee visited the campus," said Jerry Bryan, conference secretary. "The Main Campus at Covenant has seating for over 1,200 persons."

## Invitations, housing, childcare

A letter of invitation to conference members and other materials will be mailed around the first of March, Bryan said.

Included in this mailing will be a request form for delegates seeking housing on the campus of East Carolina University.

"Campus housing will be limited to one residence hall so it is important for anyone wanting to stay on campus to complete and return the housing request form as soon as possible. Only individuals completing the housing form will have the option to stay on the campus," Bryan said.

The forms for requesting childcare during the conference will also be included in the mailing.

## Pre-Conference information

Members will receive a Pre-Conference Book, formerly called the *Book of Reports and Recommendations*, at the district training sessions.

The dates, times and locations should be announced in late March or early April.

"During conference last year, over \$13,000 was spent on mailing the *Book of Reports* and other documents. Following the recommendations of a conference task force which looked at the mailing, printing, and other areas to reduce the overall cost of the conference, only items that require a vote will be printed and provided to conference members," Bryan said.

Reports, action items, and other information related to the conference will be available for download

from the conference Web site, NCCUMC.ORG. Updates and additional information will be posted when available. Included in items for download will

be the 32 constitutional amendments from the General Conference that will require a vote, Bryan said.

## Adjustment in schedule

An adjustment has been made to the Thursday and Friday schedules to provide time for the teaching sessions by Adam Hamilton, who was previously announced as Annual Conference's featured speaker, on Friday afternoon and evening.

The retiree recognition service, Board of Pensions luncheon and the Memorial Service, held on Friday in past years, will be held on Thursday. The Memorial Service is a 10:45 a.m. Order of The Day.

Rather than recognizing awards throughout the conference, an Order of the Day has been designated at 11:30 p.m. on Friday for awards presentations. Scheduled during that time are: Missions/Key Taylor Award, Laity and Clergy Evangelism Award, Church and Society Kay and Jack Crum Award, and United Methodist Foundation Saints of God Award.

\* Bill Norton is conference director of communications and NCC Christian Advocate editor.



# April adult Bible study *continued from page 12*

someone who is born as an old man and gets younger as life goes on. (He ends up an infant.) What struck me strange about the movie—albeit the movie is a fantasy—is that the folks who witnessed this strange circumstance sort of took it in stride. Although those closest to Benjamin find their own lives affected by this unusual “unaging,” no one seems to bother to mention it to anyone else.

Is it too much of a stretch to acknowledge that there are times when our relationship with the risen Lord is like that; it affects us but we have hardly mentioned it to anyone else. It is highly unusual to have access to such power, but we have hardly mentioned it to anyone else. It is not the way most relationships are, but we have hardly mentioned it to anyone else.

In this week's study lesson (Luke 24:48), Jesus tells the disciples that they have seen all this (cross and resurrection), and now there will be power for them from God (24:49). And Luke's “second gospel” (the Book of Acts) is an account of just what happens when such power is unleashed by the witnesses. Do we dare pray “Do it again, Lord?”

## What Someone Else Has Said:

Emil Brunner (*Letter to the Romans*, Westminster Press) argues “Out of the

heart faith rises to the lips as confession; faith is incomplete if it does not become audible in witness....Where faith is, there is the mandate to confess...As the substance of faith and the message in God's self-communicating love, so the self-communication of faith is once more its natural movement forward.”

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: “Do it again, Lord! We open ourselves to the power You promise. We open ourselves to be instruments of witness to a world that longs for a good word; we open ourselves to becoming the people You would have us be: fully loving You and fully loving neighbor...”

## April 26, 2009

**Text: Acts 9:32-43 “Bringing New Life to Those in Need”**

Funny thing about God. Sometimes God works one way; sometimes God works another way. In the gospel accounts, we hear “your faith has made you well” (Matthew 9:22, Matthew 15:28, Mark 10:52, Luke 17:19, for example). But here in these verses in Acts, there is no sign of the faith of the one who is healed. In the name of

Christ Jesus, Peter heals and restores to life. Maybe Peter had sufficient faith. Maybe the friends of Aeneas (Acts 9:34) or the friends of Dorcas (Acts 9:38) had sufficient faith. Maybe in earlier times Aeneas and Dorcas had shown sufficient faith. Whatever, these verses do not give us any clue about the relationship between faith and healing. It just happens. We dare not try to box in God!

John Wesley understood that we can put no boundaries on how God will work. When Wesley spoke of the means of grace by which God brings prevenient, justifying, sanctifying, and glorifying grace into our lives, Wesley refers to these as “ordinary means of grace.” In other words, *ordinarily* this is how God works, but who are we to limit how God can work!

There is a lesson to be learned here. Just about the time we think we have God figured out (“God insists on faith in order to heal”), God comes along and does something without regard to the limitations of our human reasoning! No wonder that Jesus said, “I have sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice” (John 10:16). Our Lord as much as said, “You have only part of the picture.”

The refrain that we often hear in

church is “God is good” and the answer “All the time.” “All the time...God is good!” That is the truth revealed in God's love. But our thinking some time is “God does it this way...all the time.” “All the time...God does it this way.” Not so! God's loving, healing touch does not always look the same. Jesus healed with spittle, with words, with laying on hands, with reaching out a hand. How can we claim that God always uses the same tool! God's ministry package is larger than our thinking.

So, as we reflect on this week's study text, we rejoice that Aeneas and Dorcas were given new beginnings. (Acts 9:34, 40-1). But we do not pretend that this gives us a full revelation into how God works.

## What Someone Else Has Said:

*In You Have to Face It to Fix It* (Judson Press), William D. Watley writes, “When God says no, look for God's instead. God never says no without an *instead*—a substitute, another blessing, another answer, another revelation, another way.”

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: “You are good, all the time...”





## Peace with Justice grants available

Congregations engaged in any of the following ministries are invited to apply for a Peace with Justice Grant: advocate and establish alternatives to human injustice, violence and fear; working for economic, racial, or ecological justice; or establishing ministries to help the poor to eradicate poverty. Applications are due March 31 to the Office of Missions & Justice Ministries. Detailed criteria and application information is available on-line at: [http://nccmission.org/peace\\_&\\_justice\\_grant.htm](http://nccmission.org/peace_&_justice_grant.htm).

## Lenten study offered by ZOE

ZOE Ministry is exploring what it means to willingly embrace the suffering of others with a Lenten opportunity to follow Jesus into the lives of children devastated by the HIV/AIDS crisis in Africa. The Lenten focus will lead participants through times of prayer, fasting, stories, and devotions one day a week. "What matters is that we allow our hearts to be broken by the same things that break the heart of God," says the Rev. Greg Jenks, founder of ZOE Ministry. "At the end of the day what matters is that we have been faithful to God's calling to be present to those who are hurting, giving whatever we have to give." Participants are encouraged to give the money saved by fasting six times to be multiplied through ZOE's programs of relief and empowerment. A \$5 lunch in the U.S. is the equivalent of 50 meals for a child in desperate need of relief aid. Six lunches is the equivalent of enough vegetable seeds for seven families to grow their own food. To learn more about this resource and more about ZOE's work, visit [www.zoeministry.org](http://www.zoeministry.org).

## Lay staff UM pension training

A presentation on The United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP) will be given by Peter Hang, benefits educator for The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, on Tuesday, April 21, 10 a.m. - 12 noon at Hayes Barton UMC in Raleigh. The presentation is organized for local church lay employees who participate in the UMPIP. Those planning to attend are asked to call Russell Wilcox at Hayes Barton UMC, 919-832-6435, so he will know the number of seats needed.

Details will be presented about the 403(b) retirement plan including 1. the different funds available at The General Board Of Pension; 2. how to check on individual personal investment elections (fund allocation); 3. what individual distributions options are available; 4. how to access and navigate OASIS (Online Account Services Information System); 5. how to access a UMPIP account through Hardship Loan; 6. how to check on individual risk tolerance for *LifeStage Investment Management Service* (free service offered by General Board of Pension.) Hang will also be available to meet privately to discuss any individual pension-related questions.

### Christmas in New York December 1 - 4, 2009

Join the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas in New York Theater Party. Travel to the Big Apple for theater, fine dining, and time to explore. Stay at the wonderfully located *Edison Hotel*, eat at *Tavern on the Green* and see the *Radio City Christmas Spectacular*, featuring the world famous Rockettes, *Billy Elliott*, *South Pacific* and *Mamma Mia*. Register Early and Save.

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## Children's Ministries email lists

An e-mail listserv was created for local church leaders in Children's Ministries. Monthly articles in a series called "ABC's...123's...A Place to Start" on various topics within children's ministry will be sent out as well as occasional resources and notices of opportunities. Sign up for this email listserv at <http://listserv.nccumc.org/mailman/listinfo/childmincoordinators>. An e-mail listserv was also created for local church leaders in Safe Sanctuaries. Monthly articles on topics related to safe sanctuaries will be sent out as well as occasional resources and notices of opportunities. Sign up for this email listserv at <http://listserv.nccumc.org/mailman/listinfo/safesanctuaries>.

## Restroom accessibility grants

Due to a grant by The Duke Endowment, restroom accessibility grant requests for rural churches are being accepted. Applications must be received by March 31. Applications and guidelines are available online at [http://nccmission.org/restroom\\_grant.htm](http://nccmission.org/restroom_grant.htm).

## Youth Rally Day

Conference Youth Rally Day is Sunday, April 26 from 3-6 p.m. at NC Wesleyan College in Rocky Mount. Information is available at <http://nccumc.org/youth/events/rally-day/>. Pre-registration is not required; however, any youth group wishing to offer an act of worship in the worship service or sponsor a recreation activity must register that information by Monday, April 6.

## conference CALENDAR

### March

- 3 Academy for Leadership Excellence Days of Learning; Pine Forest UMC; Goldsboro, 9:30am - 3:30pm
- 5-8 Caring for God's Creation Lake Junaluska
- 6 Church Women United - World Day of Prayer
- 7 Confirmation Celebration, 10:30am - 2:30pm; Methodist University
- 9-11 Stewardship Training for New Pastors; Trinity Center; Salter Path, NC
- 11 The Board of Institutions; Croasdaile; 12:30pm
- 17-22 Global Vision for Senior High Youth
- 22 One Great Hour of Sharing
- 28 Board of Higher Education & Campus Ministry

### April

- 4 UMW Executive Committee Meeting, 9:30am, Newton Grove UMC
- 17-19 Kaleidoscope for Middle School Youth
- 20 Stewardship Committee, 10:30am, UMB
- 23-24 Pre-Retirement Seminar; Little River Golf Resort, Carthage, NC
- 26 Native American Ministries Sunday
- 26 Conference Youth Rally Day, NC Wesleyan College, Rocky Mount
- 27 Gathering of all elders, deacons, and local pastors, 9:30am, Jarvis Memorial UMC, Greenville

For more information on upcoming North Carolina Conference events, visit the conference web site at [www.nccumc.org](http://www.nccumc.org) and click on "Calendar."





## TARP offers youth opportunities to rebuild homes, transform hearts

By Laurie Byland \*

Together, four hurricanes have devastated southern Louisiana, leaving thousands in need of help. In response to the devastating damage, First UMC in Baton Rouge, LA has created the Terrebonne Area Restoration Project (TARP).

TARP provides an opportunity for teens age 14 and older to participate in the home repair and restoration of those affected by the hurricanes.

Volunteers will work to repair roofs, floors, siding, and everything in between. Through their efforts, multiple homes in the Terrebonne area will be restored this summer.

Youth volunteers who commit one week of their summer to serve with TARP have the opportunity to apply their faith in life-changing ways by sharing Christ's love through their words and actions.

Volunteers will be immersed in a cross-cultural setting and encouraged to build new relationships

across generations, among people from other racial groups, and with those from other denominations.

After each day's work is done, volunteers will experience a true Louisiana-style celebration, followed by a time for reflection and worship.

Designed with the hope of transforming hearts and minds, the TARP experience will not only change the lives of the hurricane victims but also the lives of those who serve.

TARP volunteers are hosted in the Terrebonne area and work at one of several work sites recommended by Louisiana Conference Disaster Response, Inc.

TARP will run for seven weeks this summer between June 14 and Aug. 1. Applications from interested youth groups are being accepted. For more information, please visit [www.thebluetarp.com](http://www.thebluetarp.com).

\* Laurie Byland is director of the Terrebonne Area Restoration Project.

## Around the CONFERENCE



### First UMC, Laurinburg - Ministry Fair

On Sunday, February 15, First UMC, Laurinburg, held a ministry fair following each church service. The ministry fair featured booths for the different ministries in the church and revolved around the theme "Get in the Game." The fair came at the conclusion of a week-long study on "Made for a Mission" during a 6-week study that the church was doing from *Forty Days of Purpose* by Rick Warren. In keeping with the "Get in the Game" theme, the congregation was served popcorn as they went from booth to booth deciding where they wanted to share their individual talents in the church. The ministry fair was well received by all who attended. Each individual left more informed about the ministries of First UMC. The church is planning on making the fair a yearly event.

## DEATHS

**HASKETT, L.D.** (Wilmington: Kelly Trinity interim), died on Jan. 12. His funeral was held Jan. 15, at Shiloh UMC in Leland.

**PRICE, Clayton**, former pastor of Wilmington: Bethel/Lebanon in the late 1970's, died. A memorial service was held Feb. 12 at Bogansville UMC in Jonesville, SC.

**PORTS, Jamie**, widow of the Rev. George Ports, died Feb. 9. A memorial service was held Feb. 14, at Mebane UMC.

**HUBBARD, Charles S.** (Sanford: retired) died Feb. 16. A memorial service was held at Pittsboro: First UMC on Feb. 21.

**JOHNSON, Doris** (Elizabeth City: retired local pastor) died Feb. 21. A private family service was to be held in New York.

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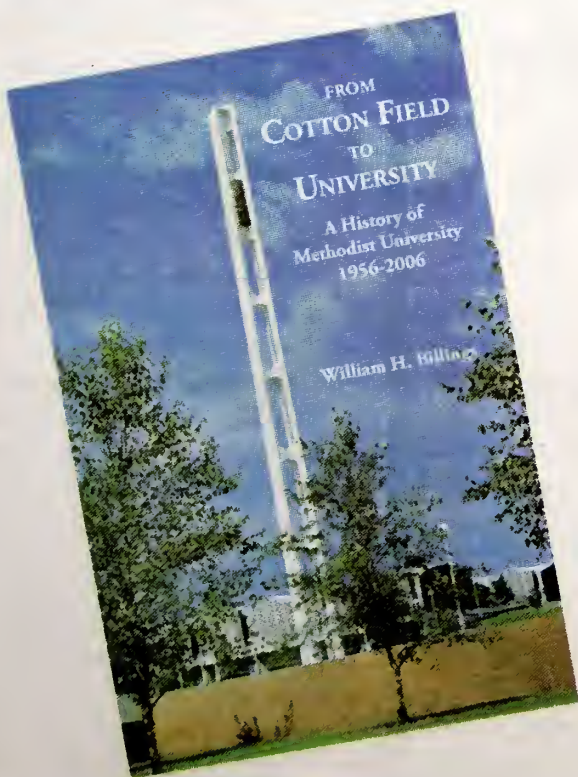
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# NCC is one of 17 conferences giving 100 percent to apportionments

By Kathy L. Gilbert \*

The North Carolina Conference was one of 17 U.S. annual conferences that gave 100 percent or more in 2008 to The United Methodist Church's seven apportioned global ministry fund, according to the UM Council on Finance and Administration.

The total collected from all 63 U.S. conferences was \$130.6 million. The total percentage paid in 2008 was 86.24 percent of the apportioned amount of \$150.97 million, said A. Moses Rathan Kumar, top executive for the financial agency.

"Indicators of U.S. financial markets tell us our levels of giving should be

down significantly," Kumar said. "The numbers in this report indicate that the people of The United Methodist Church see a different reality."

"Giving has its biblical foundation," said Kumar and Bishop Lindsey Davis, president of the finance agency's board of directors, in a joint statement. "As recorded in 1 Chronicles 29:12-14, we honor God when we give generously."

**"We are showing the world that God's resources are abundant."**

—Bishop Gregory Palmer

"We take this opportunity to acknowledge the generous giving of local churches to the ministries of The United Methodist Church that impact lives," they said. "Every person touched by the ministries

of the Church has been enriched by your giving. Thank you for your faithfulness to the United Methodist connection and for your participation in apportionment giving."

## The seven funds

The general funds of The United Methodist Church include World Service, Africa University, Black College, Episcopal, General Administration, Interdenominational Cooperation and Ministerial Education.

The General Conference, the denomination's top lawmaking body, establishes budgets for the funds which are supported through the payment of apportionments.

Annual conferences use a specific



In 2008, United Methodists in the United States gave over \$130 million to the denomination's general funds to support the church's ministries around the world. (UMNS photo by Ronny Perry)

formula to determine how much money they need for the apportioned funds, and that is divided among local churches.

In addition, individuals, local churches, districts and annual conferences may make monetary gifts to the designated funds, of which 100 percent goes directly to a specific project or ministry.

This connectional giving enables the denomination to conduct training for church leadership and respond to emergency needs around the world.

It also serves to provide resources for spiritual development, promote racial and social justice, and participate in many global ministries, Kumar said.

At a recent gathering, Bishop Gregory Palmer, leader of the Illinois Great Rivers conference which also paid 100 percent, said, "Congregations are continuing to step up to the plate and meet the challenge. While the news media may be saying we're in a downward side, we are showing the world that God's resources are abundant."

Rick Van Giesen, Illinois Great Rivers conference treasurer and director of administrative services, agreed with Palmer's assessment.

"It is both heartening and astounding that even in the midst of this brutal economy, our people continue to give faithfully. There is no question that good folks are giving sacrificially. The impact of their contributions is being felt, literally, around the world!"

Other conferences paying 100 percent included: Alaska, Baltimore-Washington, Central Pennsylvania, Central Texas, East Ohio, Eastern Pennsylvania, Greater New Jersey, Kentucky, New York, Oklahoma Indian Missionary, Peninsula-Delaware, Red Bird Missionary, Rio Grande, West Michigan and Wisconsin.

\* Kathy Gilbert is a UM News Service news writer based in Nashville, TN.

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# Celebrating 50 years at Chestnut Ridge in Efland

Founded in the summer of 1959, 50 years of summer camp have taken place at Chestnut Ridge Camp & Retreat Center in Efland. Anniversary celebrations will continue. The idea for a camp in that area originated in the mid-1950's when The North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church wanted to provide a camping ministry to compliment the program started at Don Lee Center in Arapahoe. Many people cooperated in securing the 340-acre tract of land acquired through donations, property exchanges, and purchase. The Burlington and Durham Districts raised funds to purchase 145 acres that had been cut for timber for a price of \$2.00 per acre.

Chestnut Ridge opened with primitive hogans, covered wagons, a bathhouse, dining hall, director's house, and shop.

## A request for memories

As the celebrations are being planned, the Chestnut Ridge staff asks for stories and photographs capturing the history, tradition and special memories of camp experiences such as:

- Camping in covered wagons
- The camp donkey
- Volunteering to help build one of the cabins
- A summer as a member of the summer staff
- A special experience at a recent retreat or event

Many memories have been made over the last 50 years, and the Rev. Rhonda Parker, camp director, and the team request help in capturing these special moments in the history of Chestnut Ridge.

Stories/photos can be emailed to [nick@campchestnutridge.org](mailto:nick@campchestnutridge.org) or mailed to - 4300 Camp Chestnut Ridge Rd., Efland, NC 27243. If contributed photos should be returned, please include that information with the pictures.

Originally, all meals were to be cooked outdoors, but at the last minute some concern was expressed about this plan so a temporary dining hall was hastily erected that spring.

The screening and roofing shingles were applied as the first campers arrived for camp that summer.

In 1959, all the original camp sessions were district camps, planned and staffed by the various districts of the North Carolina Conference. In 1960, the current system of Conference-wide camping was adopted.

The camp focuses on "Forming the Inside Outside." Campers and guests are quick to report, "I feel close to God here."

Chestnut Ridge provides a time apart from the buzz of the world for quiet reflection, outdoor fun and a re-connection with one another and with God.

From all corners of God's earth, staff and campers will gather this summer to celebrate God and God's creation along with the impact of the Chestnut Ridge experience on the world.

To find out more about Chestnut Ridge's 50th Anniversary celebrations, go to [www.campchestnutridge.org](http://www.campchestnutridge.org).



ABOVE: The outdoor chapel on the edge of Lake Fellowship offers a sacred space for worship surrounded by God's creation.



LEFT: With 263 acres, Chestnut Ridge is a year-round Environmental Education Center. The camp has a hardwood forest, a 10-acre lake, and an organic garden.

## Conference website gets face-lift

By Derek Leek \*

With the addition of many features, the NC Conference website provides an improved workflow for United Methodist clergy and laypersons, and other visitors.

Developed using the open-source program WordPress, conference staff are able to quickly update and add content for their areas.

RSS feeds are now available which provide notification of regularly changing content. The site also makes use of online forms, Google Calendar, comments, video, audio and sharing content through various social networks.

One of the main goals when building the new site was to implement a standard structure for the site to enhance ease of navigation.

With that structure in place, the site was revamped with a new color scheme that is designed to be inviting and energetic.

Utilizing the new website features,

the conference community can engage and interact in new ways. Subscribing to updates via RSS is a way to stay up-to-date with changes made on the site.

Another goal for the website was to be a valuable resource to the local church. With the new features, the conference encourages local churches to be engaged in the news posts by being able to comment on any post. Also, the hope is that the new structure is easier to use.

In the near future, conference plans call for implementing training materials and resources via video/audio screen casts, as well as downloadable PDF documents.

This will include information/tutorials for developing church sites. The offices and ministries of the conference have been encouraged to explain how they can help the local church by providing information about "who they are" and how each can assist congregations.

In addition, plans call for incorporating new capabilities through the web ministry in the ever-changing Internet world.

As the site continues to develop, feedback and questions can be directed to the Derek Leek ([dleek@nccumc.org](mailto:dleek@nccumc.org)), or to Bill Norton ([bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org)).

\* Derek Leek is the conference web ministries producer.

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# Jon Strother named new Raleigh DS

The Rev. Jonathan Eric (Jon) Strother will become the Raleigh District superintendent on July 1, Bishop Al Gwinn has announced. Strother currently is serving as pastor of Benson Memorial UMC in Raleigh.

Following the practice of previous years, Strother's appointment was announced before the Cabinet began work on the appointments to be announced at Annual Conference in June. He is sitting with the Cabinet during the appointment process.

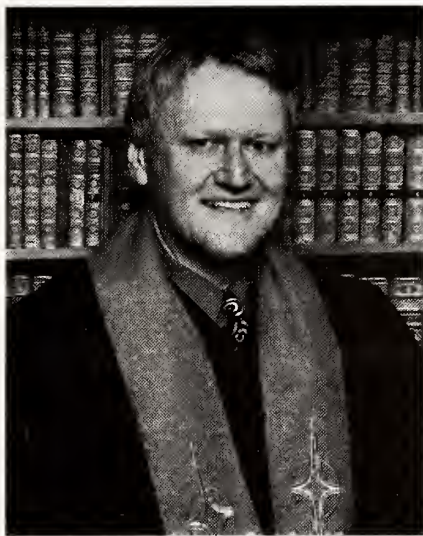
He will replace Tim Russell, the current Raleigh District superintendent, who is also serving as assistant to the bishop and director of ministerial relations.

Announcing the additional assignment for Russell earlier this year, Bishop Gwinn said he would not name a new Raleigh District superintendent until the Cabinet began the appointment process in March.

Russell will continue to serve as assistant to the bishop and director of ministerial relations after July 1. Strother will continue serving as pastor of Benson Memorial until July 1.

A native of Sanford, Strother graduated from Sanford Central High School and has a B.A. in religion from Methodist University and an M.Div. degree from Duke Divinity School.

In addition to Benson Memorial, Strother has served pastorates at the



Jon Strother

Macon Charge in the Raleigh District, associate at Hayes Barton in Raleigh, Rose Hill, Hertford, and founding pastor of Windborne in Raleigh.

He and his wife, Diana, have three daughters.

## NCWC from page 1

positions in Atlanta.

Gray has served on the board of directors of a number of community-improvement organizations in Atlanta, New York, and North Carolina. He is a member of University UMC in Chapel Hill and Duke Chapel in Durham.

Gray succeeds Interim President Dr. Stanley P. Caine, who has served Wesleyan since last summer, following the departure of Dr. Ian Newbould. Although Gray will officially become Wesleyan's President on June 1, he will visit the College a few days a week before then to facilitate the transition to his new position.

# MERCI board eliminates three positions, ministry continues

Citing the hard reality of funding shortfalls, the Executive Committee of MERCI has eliminated three staff positions at the disaster response ministry outside Goldsboro.

"The decision was predicated solely on the basis of financial data. It is no reflection on the management or skills of the staff," said the Rev. Billy Olsen, a member of the Executive Committee. The committee serves as the personnel committee of the MERCI Board which learned about the staff reduction on March 12.

"In reviewing the growing deficit of the organization, it became apparent that reserves would be exhausted before the end of 2009 unless changes were made," said Olsen. "Current levels of income are not adequate to support six staff members. The required decision is intended to preserve the long-term sustainability of MERCI."

MERCI, the Marion Edwards Recovery Center Initiative, is the disaster response and recovery arm for The United Methodist Church's North Carolina Conference. The geographic area of the conference is

56 counties from Alamance County to the coast, north to Virginia, and down to the South Carolina border.

There are three warehouses on the property located outside Goldsboro where disaster response people are trained, materials are stored for disaster recovery, and supplies are packaged for shipping.

Among those released from the Center, effective March 31, are the Rev. Jim Huskins, program director; the assistant volunteer coordinator, and the assistant warehouse manager.

MERCI is dependent on contributions through the Conference Advance or gifts to the organization and grants for its \$449,000 budget for 2009. The North Carolina Conference does not provide operating funds for MERCI, but does provide the facilities for the ministry provided for eastern NC.

MERCI Volunteer Coordinator Ann Huffman estimates 1 million lives are touched by MERCI in a year. Some receive the care of MERCI

See "MERCI," page 7



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Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

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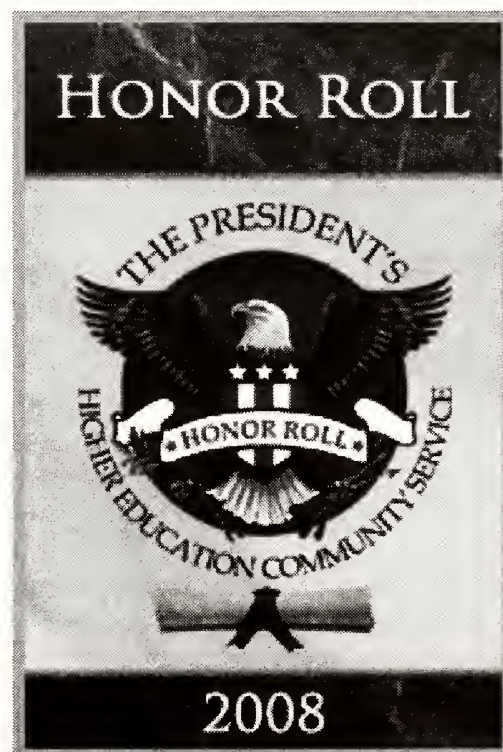
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# Faith, hope, and financial meltdown

## A Commentary — Continued from page 1

angry and irritable, and more than half reported laying awake at night worried about this.

The report concluded that, "The declining state of the nation's economy is taking a physical and emotional toll on people nationwide."

Paul Krugman, professor of economics at Princeton University and winner of the 2008 Nobel Prize in economics, offered a prescient assessment of the nation's financial condition earlier this year.

He noted that the U.S. economy is suffering from a "crisis of faith." He meant by this a growing lack of trust in our economic institutions and the securities that have backed much of our debt.

At the center of this crisis is the use of, and problems surrounding, the extension of credit. It is worth noting that "credit" is a word that is a part of the language of faith. It comes from the Latin *credere*—to

believe or to trust. The present active form of this word opens the Apostle's Creed: *credo* — "I believe." In the case of credit, belief or trust is placed in the borrower and her or his willingness and ability to repay. Our current economic crisis is in part about misplaced trust or faith between debtors and lenders.

Neither a \$700 billion bailout package, nor a Federal Reserve interest rate cut, nor presidential calls for calm seem to adequately speak to the underlying issues that precipitated this crisis of faith.

This is a moment when the Bible and people of faith have both the timely word that can calm fears and the most accurate assessment of the underlying issues that led to the current economic debacle.

The word of hope is found in the words spoken to people in adversity and even exile throughout the Bible.

***The gospel message needed today is a call to hope in a God who will not abandon us, and a call to repentance before a God who forgives and heals us.***

There are the words of the prophets spoken to the Israelites living in exile after losing everything.

To them God spoke profound words of promise: "Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my right hand" (Isaiah 41:10).

The psalmists, too, during periods of adversity wrote, "God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear." (Psalm 46:1-2).

Jesus seems to speak directly to our situation in the Sermon on the Mount when he said to first century peasants, "Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you as well" (Matthew 6:25, 33).

As we watch the Dow Jones Industrial Average drop over 1,800 points in one week, and the waves of fear and the winds of panic sweep over our collective souls, it is easy to identify with the disciples straining at their oars, being battered by the wind and waves in the fourth watch of the night as they wondered where Jesus was when they really needed him.

What comfort we find in his words of greeting as he came walking on water towards them, unshaken by the storm: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid!" (Matthew 14:27).

A few chapters ahead in the New Testament we come to Paul sitting in his prison cell writing his epistle to the Philippians.

He's awaiting the outcome of a trial that could see him executed, and yet he has the faith to write, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).

And how timeless are those words written to Timothy—instructions for what he was to preach to the people of Ephesus: "Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God" (I Timothy 6:17).

The credit crisis serves to point to the inadequacy of any ultimate credo whose object is anything but God.

God is our refuge and strength. And God's sustaining power is not tied to the Dow.

It is crucial that we invite people to put their hope in God, and offer them the assurance that comes from faith in him. The Bible's Chronicler wrote Israel and Judah's history, both to offer hope for a future for the people whose nation had been destroyed, and to point out Judah's sins so that she might repent.

In the same way the Christian must not only offer hope, but also an accurate assessment of the ultimate causes for this present crisis, issuing a call to repentance.

The underlying causes of the current economic crisis are not financial, but spiritual. At least five of the seven deadly sins came into play: gluttony, greed, sloth, envy, and ultimately pride all came before the fall.

These led to absurd economic practices that bordered on the criminal. It was not simply the CEO's and Wall Street types who danced to this tune. It was every one of us whose 401k's prospered by their efforts.

And ultimately none of this would be possible without all who abandoned wisdom and prudence and borrowed beyond their capacity to buy houses, cars, and whatever their hearts desired without the ability to repay.

As we face the consequences of the current economic downturn, and

as we reflect upon the spiritual causes that contributed to the fall, we find comfort and truth in the words of Jesus, "One's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions" (Luke 12:15). Thank God for that! And may the truth of these words guide

us to a different future.

The gospel message needed today is a call to hope in a God who will not abandon us, and a call to repentance before a God who forgives and heals us. And ultimately it is an invitation to choose *credere* in the midst of economic meltdown.

*\* Adam Hamilton is senior pastor of United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, KS and author of Seeing Gray in a World of Black and White. He will conduct teaching sessions during the NC Annual Conference in Greenville in June. A version of this commentary appeared in the January-February edition of Good News Magazine. Reprinted with permission.*



Adam Hamilton

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# Wesley had prescient advice for an economy in trouble

## A Commentary

By J. Richard Peck \*

In 1772, John Wesley, 69, addressed a letter to the editor of Lloyd's *Evening Post* regarding the causes of and cures for high unemployment, food shortages and dismal economic conditions.

While the US is struggling today with high gas prices, a declining stock market and inadequate health care, our situation would scarcely rival that of 1772 England.

"Why are thousands of people starving—perishing for want, in every part of England?" Wesley asked. "I have known those who could only afford to eat a little coarse food every other day. I have known those gathering the bones, which the dogs had left in the streets, and making broth of them, to prolong a wretched life."

### The cause

Wesley blamed many English practices for the impoverished state of the nation.

First, he blamed the wasteful use of grain to produce alcohol. "Have we not reason to believe that half of the wheat produced in the kingdom is every year consumed, not by so harmless a way as throwing it into the sea, but by converting it into deadly poison—poison that naturally destroys, not only the strength and life, but also the morals of our countrymen."

Secondly, he cited wealthy people who need horses for sport, pleasure and export. "Most of the considerable farmers, particularly in the northern counties, who used to breed large numbers of sheep or horned cattle, and frequently both, no longer trouble themselves with either sheep, or cows, or oxen; as they can turn their land to far better account, by breeding horses alone. Such is the demand, not only for coach and chaise horses, which are bought and destroyed in incredible numbers; but much more for bred horses, which are yearly exported by

hundreds, yea thousands, to France."

Third, he criticized the fact that unproductive large farms had replaced small family farms, causing a shortage of poultry, pork and eggs.

"Every one of these little farmers kept a few swine, with some quantity of poultry; and, having little money, was glad to send his bacon, or pork, or fowls and eggs, to market continually. Hence, the markets were plentifully served, and plenty created cheapness; but, at present, the great, the gentlemen farmers, are above attending to these little things. They breed no poultry or swine, unless for their own use; consequently they send none to market."

Fourth, Wesley blamed high taxes. "Enormous taxes are laid on almost everything that can be named. Not only abundant taxes are raised from earth, and fire, and water; but, in England, the ingenious statesmen have found a way to tax light. Only one element—air—remains, and surely some man of honor will con-

trive to tax this also. For how long shall the saucy air blow in the face of a gentleman, nay, a lord, without paying for it?"

Fifth, he cited the national debt, which sounds surprisingly contemporary. "Taxes are high because of the national debt. I have heard that the national expense, in the time of peace, was, sixty years ago, three million a year. Now the bare interest of the public debt amounts to above four million. To raise which, with the other expenses of government, those taxes are absolutely necessary."

### The cures

Wesley believed that most of the economic problems were caused by a growing disparity between the rich and the poor.

He felt the cure was to repress "luxury, either by example, by laws, or both." He asked legislators to establish laws that would prohibit the distillation of alcohol, and while he lamented high taxes upon the poor and middle class, he called for additional taxes on luxury items such as horses and carriages. He also expressed concern about future generations and called for a reduction of the national debt.

In short, Wesley called for higher taxes on the wealthy and laws that prohibited wasting natural products.

While Wesley did not tell the readers of Lloyd's *Evening Post* about his personal actions, he organized groups of Methodists to visit the London workhouses where poor people were housed and employed. The groups also provided worship services for the inmates, most of whom were children and elderly persons.

### The lessons

Contemporary application of Wesley's advice would suggest that Congress should reduce taxes on the poor and middle class, add taxes to luxury items, introduce laws that govern the use of natural resources, and take steps to reduce the \$10 trillion national debt, a debt has increased by 71.9 percent over the last eight years.

A record 28 million Americans are now receiving food stamps.

While Wesley did not write about his personal actions, his life is as an example to United Methodists about the personal obligation to care for these persons by a variety of means.

\*The Rev. Peck is a retired clergy member of the New York Conference and communications director of the General Commission on UM Men. Reprinted with permission of the UM Reporter ([www.umportal.org](http://www.umportal.org)).

# We must never, ever lose our hope

## A Commentary

By Ken Garfield \*

I gave a talk on church communications to 125 clergy and other staff members in Goldsboro, but it was the haunting words of one pastor that I carried home with me from eastern North Carolina.

The theme of the program was the importance of telling our stories to the congregation and community; that we must go beyond publicizing events and celebrate our people and ministries with warmth and depth. Pulling a page from Myers Park UMC: Don't just share the date and time of the first meeting of the widows' support group (ours is Sisters of Ruth). Share the tears of the widow whose pain inspired the creation of the group.

The other main point of my day-long sermon was this: We all can tell our stories regardless of the size and wealth of our congregation. If you have to, circulate that powerful story on a mimeographed sheet of paper that you hand out after worship.

My friend in the front row, though, wasn't encouraged.

Near the end of the program, just before the women of the country church served barbecue sandwiches, he shared a lament that I'm afraid too many pastors take to heart: "How can I tell our stories," he asked, "when our church has to go to the funeral home to make copies? Some churches can't even afford Internet service at the office. The pastor has to go online at the parsonage. What's a church like this to do?"

I worry that his melancholy hovers like a fog over

his ministry, clouding his ability to reach people in all sorts of ways. I worry that my friend isn't alone, that other preachers who must toil with few financial resources allow that reality to drain them of passion, energy and the creativity to get the job done.

If a lack of money keeps a pastor (and a church) from telling its stories, what's next? No resources for Vacation Bible School books and posters, so no Vacation Bible School? Not enough money in the missions budget, so no more mission trips?

The other clergy at the conference assured me that I had made my point: We all can communicate to the best of our financial ability.

But I'm haunted by the plaintiveness of my friend, and by my fear that other congregations allow themselves to be crippled.

Listen! Mainstream, mainline churches, many of them United Methodist, are losing members and, thus, money. It's not likely to get any better in these crisis-ridden times.

How can we convince searchers and seekers that we are vibrant, hopeful places if we are neither vibrant nor hopeful?

We may not be able to do much about our financial vibrancy. But we must never, ever lose our hope. Even if we have to run to the funeral home to run off copies of that great story sure to touch hearts.

\*Ken Garfield, former religion editor of *The Charlotte Observer*, is director of communications at Myers Park UMC in Charlotte. He can be reached at [ken@mpumc.org](mailto:ken@mpumc.org).

**We may not be able to do much about our financial vibrancy. But we must never, ever lose our hope.**



# Mothers' Day Offering 2009

## Sunday May 10th



Thank you to the following churches for their support of the 2008 Mother's Day Offering. This offering provides benevolent care for residents in our communities who through no fault of their own, are no longer able to pay their way.

In 2008 benevolent care at our Croasdaile Village, Cypress Glen and Wesley Pines communities reached \$2.3 million.

We hope you will continue to support these residents as they age with us in a safe and secure home.

### Burlington

Belmont UMC  
Bethel UMC  
Burlington UMC  
Bethel-Pelham UMC  
Camp Springs UMC  
Carr UMC  
Carrboro UMC  
Cedar Cliff UMC  
Cedar Grove UMC  
Center UMC  
Christ Chapel Hill UMC  
Davis Street UMC  
Emmanuel UMC  
First Elon UMC  
First Graham UMC  
Friendship UMC  
Front Street UMC  
Grace UMC  
Haw River UMC  
Hebron UMC  
Hillsborough UMC  
Leasburg UMC  
Lebanon UMC  
Locust Hill UMC  
Mebane UMC  
Mt Herman UMC  
New Hope UMC  
New Sharon UMC  
Orange Chapel UMC  
Orange UMC  
Palmer's Grove UMC  
Phillips Chapel  
Purley UMC  
Saint Paul UMC  
Salem-Alamance UMC  
Shiloh UMC  
Swepsonville UMC  
University UMC  
Union Grove UMC  
Walnut Grove UMC  
TOTAL: \$5,129

### Durham

Croasdaile Village  
Rel. Life  
Aldersgate UMC  
Allensville UMC  
Asbury UMC  
Banks UMC  
Bethany UMC  
Bethesda UMC  
Calvary UMC  
Carr UMC  
Community-Butner UMC  
Creedmoor UMC  
Duke Memorial UMC  
Dukes Chapel UMC  
Epworth UMC  
First Henderson UMC  
Glendale Heights UMC  
Grace UMC  
Helena UMC  
Lakewood UMC  
Lea's Chapel UMC  
Longhurst UMC  
Massey's Chapel UMC  
McMannen UMC  
Mt. Bethel Bahama UMC  
Mt. Sylvan UMC  
Mt. Zion UMC  
New Bethel UMC  
Oak Grove UMC

Oxford UMC  
Plank Chapel UMC  
Pleasant Green UMC  
Reconciliation UMC  
Resurrection UMC  
Rhems UMC  
Rougmont UMC  
St. Peters UMC  
Tabernacle UMC  
Trinity Durham UMC  
Trinity Roxboro UMC  
Zoar Chapel UMC  
TOTAL: \$19,429.90

### Elizabeth City

Anderson UMC  
Bethany Chowan UMC  
Bethany Wanchese UMC  
Buxton UMC  
City Road UMC  
Duck UMC  
Edenton UMC  
Epworth UMC  
Fair Haven UMC  
First Elizabeth City UMC  
Grace UMC  
Hebron UMC, Grandy  
Hertford UMC  
Kitty Hawk UMC  
Mackeys UMC  
McBride UMC  
Mount Carmel UMC  
Mt. Herman Creswell UMC  
Mt. Herman Eliz. City UMC  
Moyock UMC  
Murfreesboro UMC  
New Hope UMC  
Newbegun UMC  
Oak Grove UMC  
Perkins UMC  
Pilmoor Memorial UMC  
Pleasant Grove UMC  
Plymouth UMC  
Riverside UMC  
Sharon Adylett UMC  
Sharon South Mills UMC  
Trinity UMC  
Union UMC  
Wesley Memorial UMC  
Woodland UMC  
Zion UMC  
TOTAL: \$3,986

### Fayetteville

Bethabara UMC  
Camp Ground UMC  
Cokesbury UMC  
Devine Street UMC  
Erwin UMC  
First Clinton UMC  
First Raeford UMC  
Grace UMC  
Harry Hosier UMC  
Hay Street UMC  
Haymount UMC  
Hope Mills UMC  
Kipling UMC  
Leslie UMC  
Linden-Parkers UMC  
Newton Grove UMC  
Parkers UMC  
Person Street UMC  
Spring Hill UMC

St. Andrews UMC  
Wesley Heights UMC  
TOTAL: \$3,368

### Goldsboro

Antioch UMC  
Asbury UMC  
Benson UMC  
Beston UMC  
Bethel Duplin UMC  
Brogden UMC  
Buckhorn UMC  
Carlton UMC  
Corinth UMC  
Ebenezer Calypso UMC  
Elizabeth UMC  
Faison UMC  
First Mt. Olive UMC  
Fremont UMC  
Jefferson UMC  
Kenly UMC  
La Grange UMC  
Mt. Carmel UMC  
New Hope UMC  
Pine Forest UMC  
Providence UMC  
Rones Chapel UMC  
Rose Hill Society UMC  
Saint Joseph UMC  
Saint Luke UMC  
Saint Paul Goldsboro UMC  
Sarecta UMC  
Saulston UMC  
Unity UMC  
Walker Memorial UMC  
Warsaw UMC  
Webb Chapel UMC  
Wesley Chapel UMC  
Westwood UMC  
TOTAL: \$4,021

### Greenville

Asbury Washington UMC  
Aurora UMC  
Ayden UMC  
Bath UMC  
Bethel UMC  
Brooks Frizzell UMC  
Campbell's Creek UMC  
Chocowinity UMC  
Covenant Methodist Church  
Cypress Glen Spirit. Life  
Epworth UMC  
Fairfield UMC  
Farmville UMC  
First UMC/Washington  
First UMC/Williamston  
Hobucken UMC  
Holly Springs Williamston  
Jamesville UMC  
Jarvis Memorial UMC  
Jerusalem UMC  
Lanes Chapel UMC  
Mt. Hermon UMC  
St. James Greenville UMC  
St. James Tarboro UMC  
Salem UMC  
Tabernacle UMC  
Vanceboro UMC  
Warren's Chapel UMC  
Watson's Chapel UMC  
Westminster UMC  
TOTAL: \$13,168.00

### New Bern

Arapahoe UMC  
Asbury UMC  
Beauford Ann Street UMC  
Beech Grove UMC  
Centenary New Bern UMC  
Cherry Point UMC  
Dover UMC  
First Havelock UMC  
First Morehead City  
Maple Grove UMC  
Maysville UMC  
Merrimon UMC  
Northwoods UMC  
Oriental UMC  
Pamlico UMC  
Pollocksville UMC  
Reelsboro UMC  
Riverdale UMC  
Shady Grove UMC  
St. Peter's UMC  
Trenton UMC  
Trinity/Jacksonville UMC  
Tinity/ Marshallberg UMC  
Trinity/New Bern UMC  
Tuttle's Grove UMC  
Williston UMC  
TOTAL: \$3,349

### Raleigh

Apex UMC  
Asbury UMC  
Advent Ferry UMC  
Benson Memorial UMC  
Bunn UMC  
Ebenezer UMC  
Edenton Street UMC  
Fairmont UMC  
First/Cary UMC  
First/Garner UMC  
Fuquay-Varina UMC  
Genesis UMC  
Hayes Barton UMC  
Highland UMC  
Hollands UMC  
Holly Springs UMC  
Horne UMC  
Jenkins Memorial UMC  
Knightdale UMC  
Leah's Chapel UMC  
Longview UMC  
Millbrook UMC  
North Raleigh UMC  
Pleasant Grove UMC  
St. Andrews UMC  
St. Francis/Cary UMC  
St. James UMC  
St. Marks UMC  
Soapstone UMC  
Trinity UMC  
Wake Forest UMC  
Wesley Chapel UMC  
Westover UMC  
White Plains UMC  
Zebulon UMC  
TOTAL: \$16,449

### Rockingham

Asbury UMC  
Caledonia UMC  
Chestnut Street UMC  
East Rockingham UMC  
Fellowship UMC

First, Hamlet UMC  
First Laurinburg UMC  
First Pembroke UMC  
First Rockingham UMC  
Fletcher's Chapel UMC  
Gibson UMC  
Jerusalem  
Mount Olive UMC  
New Zion UMC  
Parkton UMC  
Pee Dee UMC  
Prospect UMC  
Rowland UMC  
Saint Pauls UMC  
Trinity Fairmont UMC  
Trinity Red Springs UMC  
Trinity UMC  
Walls Chapel UMC  
TOTAL: \$1,878

### Rocky Mount

Battleboro UMC  
Bethany UMC  
Bethlehem UMC  
Concord UMC  
Elm City UMC  
Enfield UMC  
Englewood UMC  
First Roanoke Rapids UMC  
First Rocky Mount UMC  
First Wilson UMC  
Halifax UMC  
Macon UMC  
Marvin UMC  
McKendree UMC  
Mt. Pleasant UMC  
Mt. Zion UMC  
Oak Grove UMC  
Pleasant Hill UMC  
Red Oak, UMC  
Rich Square UMC  
Rosemary UMC  
Scotland Neck UMC  
Seaboard UMC  
Severn UMC  
Shiloh UMC  
Smith UMC  
Temperance Hall UMC  
Warren Plains UMC  
West Nash UMC  
Winstead UMC  
Woodland UMC  
York Chapel UMC  
Zion Conway UMC  
Zion Norlina UMC  
TOTAL: \$4,808

### Sanford

Broadway UMC  
Brown's Chapel UMC  
Buckhorn UMC  
Bynum UMC  
Carthage UMC  
Center UMC  
Chatham UMC  
Cool Springs UMC  
Ebenezer UMC  
First Pittsboro UMC  
First Siler City UMC  
First Troy UMC  
Jonesboro UMC  
Lemon Springs UMC  
Love Joy UMC

Macedonia UMC  
Meroney UMC  
Moncure UMC  
Morris Chapel UMC  
Mount Carmel UMC  
Mount Gilead UMC  
Mount Vernon UMC  
Ophir UMC  
Page Memorial UMC  
Pinebluff UMC  
Pinehurst UMC  
Pleasant Hill Pittsboro UMC  
Pleasant Hill Robbins UMC  
Poplar Springs UMC  
Roseland UMC  
Saint Luke UMC  
Sapling Ridge UMC  
Sardis UMC  
Smyrna UMC  
Southern Pines UMC  
Star UMC  
Uwharrie UMC  
West End Bonlee UMC  
West End UMC  
Zion UMC  
TOTAL: \$2,275

### Wilmington

Carver's Creek UMC  
Evergreen UMC  
Hampstead UMC  
Jordan's Chapel UMC  
Lebanon UMC  
Live Oak UMC  
Ocean View UMC  
Pine Valley UMC  
Saint Pauls UMC  
Seaside UMC  
Sharon UMC  
Trinity Southport UMC  
Trinity Elizabethtown UMC  
Trinity Wilmington UMC  
Wesley Memorial UMC  
Wesley Riegglewood  
Wesley's Chapel  
Whiteville UMC  
Wrightsboro UMC  
Wrightsville UMC  
TOTAL: \$4,040

The Croasdaile Village  
Religious Life and Residents  
Gift of \$13,387 is shown in  
the Durham District Total.

The Cypress Glen Spiritual  
Life and Residents Gift  
of \$3,368 is shown in the  
Greenville District total.

Beverly S. Pierpoint  
UMRH Director,  
Corporate Communications  
and Annual Giving

**2008 Calendar Year Total: \$87,300 (fiscal year \$92,919)**

For further information, call Bev Pierpoint, The United Methodist Retirement Homes, Inc. at (919) 384-3006.



## Project AGAPE

Project AGAPE is a collaborative effort of the North Carolina and the Western North Carolina Conferences of The United Methodist Church in a joint effort with the Armenian Apostolic Church.

### AGAPE team seeks supporters

The Project AGAPE Board is looking for dedicated people from the North Carolina Conference to serve in a ministry transforming the lives of countless persons in an area that has suffered historic devastation. The AGAPE Team is entering deeper connections with refugee families, construction of homes, and mission education opportunities – ministries of discipleship and proclamation, communication, humanitarian response, and medical care. Please email Steve Taylor – staylor@nccumc.org or Kathy Reavis – kreavis@nccumc.org or call 800-849-4433 ext 256.

### Packers needed for shipment to Project AGAPE Armenia

Volunteers are needed to pack a shipment of humanitarian goods to refugees and other needy people in Armenia. Packing will be done on Saturdays into April. Please come and engage in hands-on ministry that connects with Christian brothers and sisters in the world's oldest and most devastated Christian nation. To schedule work teams, contact Ann Huffman at 888-440-9167 or merci@nccumc.org.

## Billy-buc's first communion

### Discipleship Stories

*The Advocate welcomes personal stories about prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness from clergy and laypersons. These firsthand stories should offer inspiration to others. When possible, one will be published per issue. Names should be real, but if the person prefers anonymity, a substitute can be used if identified as such. Stories should be a maximum of 350 words. Avoid using "you, me, my, I, and ours" unless in a direct quote. The writer's name and connection to the story should be identified (such as pastor of ..., member of ..., workteam member). E-mail submissions to bnorton@nccumc.org and put "Discipleship" in the subject line.*

By Carol Dean \*

It was Christmas Eve. He was there as he had been for years. If no other time during the year, he came for Christmas Eve. Billy-buc lived on the other side of the country, but he always came home for Christmas.

He was a Sunday school drop-out in his typical teen years. He had been taught the Bible stories well as a child and youth, yet as many do, he wandered off to find his way in the world. He was aware of his own shortcomings and his struggles.

There is something secure and assuring about coming home...back to the roots that sustain us. Just as Christmases before, he was there to encounter the wonder of Christmas at the candlelight service. Yet each year, as the Preacher explained no one is worthy except by the grace of Jesus, he remained in his pew. He was not ready...until now.

Billy-buc shook as he stepped into the aisle, a cousin by his side to support his journey. He broke out in a sweat. He shook, but he walked forward, each step was a struggle. He partook of his first Communion. He

wept. He rejoiced. He sang as he lit his candle.

As everyone departed with "Joy to the World," he looked at the Preacher and said, "I'm not through. I have to go back." He bolted for the altar, knelt, wept and prayed. He was 57.

As John Wesley believed, Holy Communion is a converting ordinance. We are never the same once we encounter the risen Christ.

Terry Tekyl has a devotion guide "My Most Wanted Devotional: 40 Days to Pray for the Lost." Christians are called to be faithful, to witness and share the Gospel, to pray for the lost, to do our part. The rest is up to God.

No, Billy-buc has not committed to be baptized, but he is a changed man. This story is not complete, just as our stories are not complete...but that is how our faith-sharing journeys are never complete...for our own faith stories live on in those Christ puts in our pathways.

In Lent, Billy-buc is "number one" on the Preacher's "Ten Most Wanted" Prayer list. Who is on yours?

\* The Rev. Carol Dean is pastor of Plank Chapel in the Durham District and chair of the Conference Evangelism Committee.

## Tornado-damaged home being rebuilt by MERCI volunteers



At the request of the NC Emergency Management Individual Assistance division, MERCI Mission Center has managed the removal of a tornado-damaged house near Kenly and its rebuilding. The uninsured house was the home of a single mom and two young adult sons.

Volunteers and donors have helped in all areas of the project including demolition, preparation of footings, donations of concrete and blocks, wall framing, window and door installation, roofing, plumbing and electrical.

Teams have come from local communities as well as from as far away as Rhode Island. Adults, college students, and youth have contributed; United Methodists, Baptists, and Quakers are among the denominations working on the project. As of March 6, a total of 11 teams with a total of 193 volunteers have contributed 2,869 hours of labor.

Upon completion of the house an official blessing of the home will be conducted and all volunteers will be invited to be present when the family receives the new keys and a Bible.

## MERCI disaster response from page 3

volunteers who respond following a disaster. Other disaster-affected areas benefit from the health kits and flood buckets prepared by United Methodists at MERCI. Food and supplies shipped from MERCI for the NCC Board of Missions have gone to Haiti, Liberia, Rwanda or other places where this mission has provided life-sustaining support for thousands.

"Assuring the viability of MERCI as a Disaster Response and Recovery ministry is the primary objective of the tough decision to eliminate these staff positions. The NC Conference is grateful for the hard work and the dedication of every member of the

team," said the Rev. Carol Goehring, executive director of Conference Connectional Ministries and a member of the Executive Committee.

The summer Footprints program will continue to offer young people opportunities for service and spiritual formation under the direction of a Field Education intern from Duke Divinity School and other staff.

Volunteers are needed for the ongoing ministry of MERCI, not just following a disaster. Financial contributions also are needed, even with the reduced staff, to sustain the organization, paying for utilities, equipment and other operating costs.

## United Methodist Men MERCI Open Golf Tournament

May 14, 2009  
Lane Tree  
Country Club  
Goldsboro, NC



Partnership to support  
MERCI Center

### Prizes

4 Flights  
Top Two Teams Awarded  
In Each Flight  
1st \$400 - 2nd \$200

Closest to pin  
On Par 3 (Hole #8)  
Gift TBA

Longest/Straightest Drive  
On Par 5 (Hole #10)  
Gift TBA

### Team Information

Entry Fee  
Individual-\$65; Foursome-\$260  
(Fee covers Gift, Cart,  
BBQ Meal & Drinks)

### Sponsor Information

Hole Sponsorship—\$100  
Visit our website for other  
levels of sponsorship.  
(Gold & Silver Levels include  
4-Person Team Registration.)

Register @  
www.merciumc.org  
Or call 888-440-9167



# United Methodists in ministry and mission —

## Pine Forest and Seymour Johnson AFB Families work together

Working together, Pine Forest UMC in Goldsboro, airmen and their families from Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, and STOP Hunger Now have packaged 110,880 meals for two refugee camps outside Afghanistan's capital of Kabul.

Approximately 220 volunteers gathered at the MERCI Mission Center in Goldsboro on March 14 to hand-pack rice and soy meals in weather-resistant containers for shipping to Afghanistan. Each pack can feed eight people.

The volunteers, coordinated by Wing Chaplain, Lt. Col Scott Ofsdahl, USFA, gathered at MERCI at 10 a.m. for an opening prayer by the Rev. Billy Olsen, Pine Forest UMC and instructions by Ricky Kearney of STOP Hunger Now. In less than an hour, the meals were packed and ready to be shipped.

The Denton Program, which allows nonprofits to use available space on military cargo planes to transport humanitarian goods, will be used to get the meals to Afghanistan.

After the packing of meals was completed, volunteers were invited to Pine Forest UMC for a meal prepared by church members.

Olson said he was already working on the next partnership of Pine Forest and airmen and families from Seymour Johnson Air Force Base.



Following an opening prayer from the Rev. Bill Olsen, Seymour Johnson airmen and Pine Forest UMC volunteers began packing meals of soy flour, vegetables, rice, and vitamins in water-tight containers. The containers were then stacked four-high for wrapping. They will be shipped to Afghanistan to feed people living in a refugee camp near Kabul. (Photo by Bill Norton)

## Cypress Creek hosts volunteers from area churches for Stop Hunger Now meal packaging event

By Chris Lavender \*

Families living in Kabul, Afghanistan, will soon have something nutritious to eat thanks to several Jones County based churches.

A multi-denominational and multi-cultural team of 57 volunteers from 16 churches met at Cypress Creek UMC where they assembled and packaged meals for those in need in a far-away land.

During the event, 10,092 packets were prepared, which will make

60,000 meals.

Stop Hunger Now operations director Rick Kearney said nearly 145,000 meals were to be shipped to Afghanistan in March. The meals are distributed by the "Trust in Education" organization.

"Hunger is a global problem that requires a global solution," Kearney said. "It's great that rural communities' congregations can come together for a good cause."

The church volunteers worked in groups to get the meals ready, which consisted of soy flour, vegetables, rice and multi-vitamin tablets.

Cypress Creek UMC pastor Roy Rodgers thanked everyone for participating in the event. Some local churches also provided financial donations for the cause. "We wanted to get the whole community involved with this," Rodgers said. "It's been a blessing to see this happen."

Jones County Churches represented were: Agape Family, Bethel Holiness, Christian Faith Assembly, Cypress Creek UMC, Friendship OFWB, Lanie's Chapel Christian, Lee's Chapel UMC, Pollocksville UMC, Shady Grove UMC, St. Mary Holy Church, and Tuckahoe Christian. Churches outside Jones County



Measured ingredients are added to the meal packets. A gong rang each time 1,000 meals were packaged.

represented were Alliance UMC, Arapahoe UMC, Englewood UMC, Pamlico UMC, and Richlands UMC.

The cost to prepare the meal packages was about \$2,500. Each volunteer also had an opportunity to taste a sample of the packaged meals.

Church members said they decided to volunteer their time on Valentine's Day to serve others and share the love of Christ. Cypress Creek Lay Leader David Andrews said, "We did not start to grow until we started giving." Andrews is among the church's 50 current members.

\* Chris Lavender is a staff writer for the Kinston Free Press. Updated with information from Cypress Creek UMC. Reprinted by permission.



## Fair Haven UMC - UM Women Nursing Home Outreach

Fair Haven United Methodist Women and friends (Elizabeth City District) recently visited with residents of Britthaven of the Outer Banks, a nursing home located in Nags Head. The group is shown sharing favorite hymns with the residents. The Fair Haven unit receives much inspiration from this regular activity as it ministers through song, scripture, prayers and the distribution of bananas.



# Reaching out to the world beyond their walls



## Confirmation Celebration explores vows, bags meals for the hungry

Over 300 confirmands and their adult leaders gathered at Methodist University in Fayetteville on Saturday, March 7, for the annual Conference Confirmation Celebration. The group explored the membership covenant vows of prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness as Confirmation groups from local churches (Galilee UMC, St Luke UMC-Sanford, Soapstone UMC) made presentations and led activities to explore those vows. Bagging meals with Operation Sharehouse of STOP Hunger Now was the service project. The service project was sponsored in part by the residents of Croasdaile Village Methodist Retirement Community in Durham. Bishop Gwinn spoke to the confirmands and presided in the Celebration of Holy Communion to conclude the day.



ABOVE: Notes of "thanks" were written by Confirmands to members of the Croasdaile Village Methodist Retirement Community in Durham for sponsoring the project to bag meals.

LEFT: Confirmands and adult leaders begin the meal packing process by adding the various ingredients to a bag before sealing. (Photos by Bill Norton)

## Through "A Slice of Hope" evening, Elon youth take action

By Kristin Lassiter \*

The youth of First UMC, Elon knew that they needed to do something. They had been to Pilgrimage, heard the heartwrenching stories of AIDS orphans in Africa from a ZOE Ministry presentation, and received the challenge to make a difference.

When they came back to a regular UMYF schedule in January, the first discussion was "what will we do?"

Counselors shared information from the ZOE Web site, and ideas were brainstormed. The theme of the discussion was food. The concept of a dessert fundraiser was lifted up, and soon it took on a character all its own with the help of about 20 creative teenagers.

The evening would include tables with individual themes, each hosted by 2 or 3 youth. The youth hosts would decorate, provide desserts, and wait on the patrons at their table. They would also sell the seats ahead of time.

Before long, plans were underway

for tables with themes such as safari, tropical paradise, Candyland, Mardi Gras, snow boarding, jazz, pink, Carolina, and football. They would

See "Elon youth," page 15



## Westover UMC - Valentine Dance

Westover UMC in Raleigh reaches out to God's children with special needs that reside in nearby group homes with their Zach Tree Ministry. The second Thursday of every month they gather for music, prayer, a snack, and to hear the words of the Lord. A few times a year, Westover hosts special events such as a pizza party, a cook-out, a Christmas party and a Valentine dance. This year's dance drew 114 participants including caregivers and volunteers. Hearts and messages of God's love decorated the room, and an UMYF member served as DJ for the spirited evening of music honoring the spirit of the Greatest Love.

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# Demographic reports and analysis available for congregations

A new demographic tool for strategic planning and visioning is available for congregations in the NC Conference, Dr. Irene Brownlee, acting director of Congregational Development, has announced.

Utilizing a partnership between the conference and MissionInsite, each congregation has free and unlimited access to demographic reports and analysis.

The demographic service is provided through a desktop web-based format. Any congregation with a computer and Internet access can participate and receive the service.

Through MissionInsite each congregation can discover "the story in the numbers" which has relevance for new ministry opportunities, a multi-site location, a refocusing of ministry, or a plan to equip lay people to reach new mission target groups.

"MissionInsite will allow each church the opportunity to learn about their community and then to create and implement a mission strategy to reach new groups in their community. This demographic tool is not just about creating reports for a congregation, but of having that congregation embrace a mission discovery focus and strategy," Brownlee said.

In elaborating on mission discovery, Brownlee said, "A church I visited recently had a sign over the exit door that could only be read as you left the sanctuary 'Entering the mission field.' John Wesley stated that the world is my parish. In Acts 1:8, the last words of Jesus were '...and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'"

"These words all point us in the direction of discovering the mission fields which surround our 836 churches in the North Carolina Conference," she said.

A congregation's primary mission field, according to the Rev. Lyle Schaller, voted the most respected observer of the American church scene in an LA Times poll, is defined by the average distance people in your neighborhood or community drive to work and shop.

"How far is that distance in your community? What are the characteristics of the population that lives within five miles of our church, in terms of age, ethnicity, places of employment, phases of life, household income, children at home, etc.? How has your church community changed in the last 10 years and how is it anticipated to change in the future? What are the lifestyle trends of the largest population group in your church ministry area? What is the world on your church's doorsteps?," Brownlee asked during a recent interview.

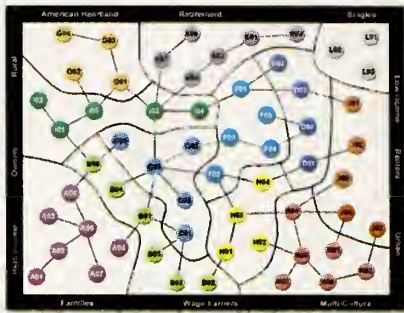
Upon entering the MissionInsite website, a number of resources are available about a congregation's community. These include a number of preset geographies such as zip codes, census tracks, towns, cities, counties, census blocks, or custom geographies can be created.

Thematic maps can visually tell the story of a congregation's ministry area from more than 50 demographic variables. "Congregant Plotting is an exceptional resource for community and congregational analysis," Brownlee said. Churches are able to plot the geographic location of members, regular attenders, and visitors on a custom map which you create. Mailing lists can also be generated for special designed inquiries.

The first step for a pastor, staff member, or congregational member who would like to use this missional demographic tool is to contact Dr. Brownlee at [ibrownlee@nccumc.org](mailto:ibrownlee@nccumc.org) or Mrs. Nancy Koontz at [nkoontz@nccumc.org](mailto:nkoontz@nccumc.org) and request the conference account number.

Descriptive materials which provide guidance in visiting the MissionInsite site will be sent upon request for the conference account number. The conference number and an authentic e-mail address are needed to activate the MissionInsite system for visits.

Read more about MissionInsite at [www.missioninsite.com](http://www.missioninsite.com).



## When Giving Away Brings Cash Back

John and Evelyn have always been generous but until recently they never knew that giving cash or securities away would bring some back day after day. The couple had done well in their retirement and even with the uncertainties of the market their nest egg had grown. However, they had some cash and CD's that just were not providing the returns they wanted. That's when John and Evelyn looked into a charitable gift annuity (CGA).

They found when they fund a gift annuity with a charitable organization like the UMRH Foundation, they obtain benefits far beyond what they were receiving. Like a CD, a gift annuity pays at a fixed rate, but instead of lasting a few months, it pays for life with rates depending on the individual's age. The remaining value after their lifetimes is used for the charity's mission.

CGA RATES		
Age	One Life	Two Lives
60	5.0 %	4.6 %
65	5.3	4.9
70	5.7	5.2
72	5.9	5.3
74	6.1	5.5
76	6.4	5.7
78	6.7	5.9
80	7.1	6.1
82	7.5	6.4
84	7.9	6.8
86	8.3	7.2
88	8.9	7.7
90	9.5	8.3

John and Evelyn called their favorite charity to see what their rate would be if each of them funded one separately or if they fund one together that would last as long as either lived. They also learned of their significant income tax deduction and discussed what the funds would be used for after their lives. If you have some cash, CD's or stock that need to work harder for you and for our mission, contact us to see how we can help you cash in by reaching out to support our cause.



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Retirement Homes Foundation  
George Deaton  
(919) 384-3004  
[www.umrhgift.org](http://www.umrhgift.org)



# Churches and the economy continued from page 1

"Robbins has been dealing with this problem for the last 10 years, as plant after plant has closed and, in all, over 3,000 jobs have been lost," said the Rev. Michael Nelson at Tabernacle in Robbins.

He listed several fund-raising events that have helped with financial obligations.

A "Spiritual Night Out" was held where each church family was given an opportunity to host a table of six to eight persons during a catered meal. The host selected a Bible verse for the theme of the table and a centerpiece was designed to emphasize the verse. "This is a great way to encourage unchurched folks to come out," Nelson said.

Another example was a Pancake Breakfast during the town festival.

Fifth Avenue in Wilmington has seen a slight reduction in regular giving. However, the Rev. Shawn Blackwelder said giving to Special Sundays, building fund, and the pastor's discretionary fund has seen a sharp drop over the past year.

"Our giving has remained steady because members of Solid Rock don't have jobs threatened by the economy at this point," said the Rev. Gil Wise. Members at the church mainly have service jobs in fast food, grocery stores and government assistance, he said.

A series of articles in an area newspaper wrote about Solid Rock that "in the past year, the number of people served by the church pantry doubled - from 350 to more than 600 a weekend."

"We reduced our budget several times during 2008, a total of 17%," said the Rev. Woody Wells at Haymount in Fayetteville, noting that the church ended the year in the black.

"We have also experienced a significant increase in unpaid pledges as the return on investments is plunging and some are losing their jobs."

At Asbury in Raleigh, the Rev. Terry Bryant said there was "no noticeable difference in contributions from last year, but with increasing unemployment we continue to monitor the situation very closely."

**Expanded ministries**

McMannen in Durham, wrote the Rev. Larry Bowden, offered assistance to the community through a workshop in resume perfection, job searching, telephone and in-person interviews.

Five churches have offered Good Sense and Financial Peace University to teach personal financial management. The end result is people getting out of debt and learning how to manage their finances according to Biblical principles.

Several churches have noticed a

significant decrease in the number of pledges but no large decrease in giving. Some have expanded or begun new ministries to feed the poor.

"We are involved in Angel Food Ministry, a food distribution program where people can purchase \$100 worth of food for \$30," said the Rev. Chris Aydlett at Trinity in Jacksonville. "There were 461 orders during the last distribution day."

"Contributions through our food ministries have increased with people realizing that their neighbors are likely more in need," said the Rev. Paul Dunham in Farmville.

Responding in another way, the Rev. Paul Stallsworth at St. Peters in Morehead City, said "brothers and sisters in the congregation will want to show their solidarity with one another. One way of showing unity with church members and friends is to do business with them."

"The next time you consider having your house's roof replaced or wiring repaired, adding a room or a deck onto your house...check first with a church member or friend who offers the services or good that you need. This will be an expression of solidarity with Christ, with His Church, with one another," he said.


*\* Bill Norton is director of communications and Advocate editor*



## BIRTHS

**Edwin "Win" Austin Ledford**, son of Laura Fine Ledford (Raleigh: All Saints' UMC, associate) and husband, Rodney, was born March 4.

**Joseph On Sung Lee**, son of the Rev. and Mrs. Paul Lee (Rocky Mount: Northampton Charge) was born Feb. 21.



## DEATHS

**THOMPSON, Frances Shearon**, widow of the Rev. Arthur Leo Thompson, died Feb. 12. A funeral service was held Feb. 17 at Southern Pines United Methodist Church.

**KING, Jean**, widow of the Rev. Kimsey King, recently died. A celebration of life and resurrection was held March 1 at Epworth UMC in Durham.

# Connectional Table proposes changes for 2010 budget continued from page 1

problem many churches face. He did not name specific line items that should be reduced or removed. The CCT voted to reduce or eliminate budget line items and sent the recommendation to CCF&A.

The approved 2010 budget totaled \$20,135,263. The revised budget amounts to \$19,767,854, a reduction of \$367,409. This revised budget represents an increase of 0.34% over the approved 2009 budget.

"It is important that we all participate in fiscal responsibility during this economic downturn," Bishop Gwinn said in an interview after the CCT meeting.

"The action taken by the CCT is an example of the partnership that exists between the conference and local churches and the sensitivity of the conference leadership listening to and responding to the concerns of local congregations."

"We are in a challenging time but we should not be dominated by fear. Churches should continue to be on the offensive to make disciples of Jesus Christ. These can be days of blessing in the sense that they challenge us to be more creative," Gwinn said.

Annual Conference staff are evaluating other ways to reduce budgets and spending now in 2009 as well, rather than waiting until 2010.

These economic conditions have prompted new ways to evaluate efficiencies and actively work to reduce spending while maintaining support for the local church and the vision

of the conference. One example of a simple way to reduce costs was found when examining how bank transactions are being processed.

By consolidating banking activities such as writing checks only once per week and making deposits every other day instead of every day are expected to save around \$14,000 per year in bank fees.

Each CCT team is prioritizing funding for ministries if additional changes are needed in the 2009 budget, which was raised in 2008. The 2009 operating budget has

already been reduced by almost 7% because of the shortfall in the amount of funds raised.

More information about the budget and the specific reductions will be provided during the Annual Conference Briefing Sessions planned for May and in the pre-Conference reports.

*\* Bill Norton is director of communications and Advocate editor. Also contributing to this article were Christine Dodson, NC Conference treasurer, and Steve Taylor, conference director of missions.*

### Church Mice



OH BLESSED LORD WHO GAVE THYSELF UPON THAT WICKED TREE...

I THANK THEE NOW FOR DYING THERE TO SAVE WHAT'S LEFT OF ME...

... REALLY MAKES THOSE CHOCOLATE BUNNIES SEEM HOLLOW, DOESN'T IT?

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By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

## May 3, 2009

**Text: Ephesians 1:3-14**  
**"New Family in Christ"**

It has been reported that John Wesley would sometimes begin his day by opening the Bible randomly, pointing arbitrarily at a verse, and then start reading. He would read until he came to what he understood to be God's message to him for that day, maybe a few verses, maybe a chapter, maybe several chapters.

He would not have had to read very long in this week's study text, no matter where first he pointed!

This biblical lesson is packed with images and messages and insights that define the Christian journey. "Spiritual blessing" (Ephesians 1:3). "Chose us in Christ" (1:4). "Adoption as his children through Jesus Christ: (1:5). "Glorious grace" (1:6). "In him we have redemption through his blood" (1:7). "Forgiveness of our trespasses (1:7). "The mystery of his will" (1:9). "To gather up all things in him" (1:10). "We have obtained an inheritance" (1:11). "Our hope on Christ" (1:12). "God's own people" (1:13).

There is a month of sermons in there! One common thread that weaves its way through the fabric of this study is "family." All of these verses point toward a common life as adopted children in the family of God.

Go back to the preceding paragraph and reflect on the link between each

of the quoted phrases and the experience of "God's own people."

Ask yourself: What does the verse say about God's family?

There is a certain danger in using "family" to describe what it is like to be God's people. Some people have not had positive journeys with their earth-families.

Someone who has had an abusive parent, an overbearing sibling, or a lonely, empty childhood might well fear that God's family is going to be like that. Might there be for such persons—indeed for all of us—encouragement in how God's family is described: blessing, gracious grace, forgiveness, lavished, inheritance. Now that's family life to be enjoyed!

The presence of the Holy Spirit is the escrow account, guaranteeing that God's promise of redemption is true (1:14).

Translators reach for words that will capture that reality of redemption: "foretaste" (Weymouth), "first installment" (Williams), "certificate" (Cotton Patch), "signed, sealed, and delivered" (Message), and "as good as done" (oops, that's my translation).

Now that's a family with an unbroken bond!

### What Someone Else Has Said:

In Marilynne Robinson's novel *Home*, (Farrar, Straus and Giroux) one renegade family member is described this way: "He was the black sheep, the ne'er-do-well, unremarkable in photographs....It was the sad privilege of blood relations to love him despite it all."

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Loving Parent, this is Your child speaking..."

## May 10, 2009

**Text: Ephesians 2:1-10**  
**"New Life in Christ"**

Perhaps every United Methodist congregation—indeed, all denominations in the Wesleyan tradition—should put Ephesians 2:8-10 on a

sign in front of the church building. It might clear up some misunderstandings. Because those of us in the tradition of John and Charles Wesley understand that faith expresses itself in good works, we sometimes get (incorrectly) accused of thinking we are saved by our good works.

These verses make it clear that saving faith is a gift from God, not the reward or harvest for doing good things.

Charles Wesley wrote a hymn to make the same point: "Let us plead for faith alone, faith which by our works is shown; God it is who justifies, only faith the grace applies" (Hymn 385, *United Methodist Hymnal*). The closing line of that hymn is "...saved by faith which works by love."

Indeed, we are delighted to see holy lives, lives filled with loving good deeds, lives shaped by sanctifying grace; but such delight is precisely because we understand that such lives are expressions of the preceding gift of faith ("not the result of works, so that no one may boast" (2:9).

Some traditions have put so much emphasis on "getting saved by faith" that they have diluted the importance of how our lives are lived as "new life in Christ."

Once when evangelist Dwight L. Moody was asked how he felt about people's jumping and shouting on their way to the altar, loudly proclaiming faith in Christ, he replied: "It is not how high you jump, but how straight you walk once you land."

These verses in Ephesians remind us that the Christian journey is indeed a journey of holy living, for we are "created in Christ Jesus for good works" (2:10). In theological language that holy living is called "sanctification."

John Wesley taught that the goal was entire sanctification (or Christian perfection). That means full love of God and full love of neighbor. To deny the possibility of Christian perfection is to put a boundary around God's grace that God has not put.

The word in Ephesians 2:9 that is translated "gift" (of God) is *dōron*. Interestingly, that same word is sometimes translated "sacrifice."

Perhaps we do not stretch the point too finely to say that we are saved by the sacrifice of God, saved for the good works for which we were created in Christ (2:10).

### What Someone Else Has Said:

Thomas Langford has written, (*The Holy Spirit*, ed., Dow Kirkpatrick, Tid-

ings): "Holiness...is not a realized state of being...; it is, rather, a continuously realized and a continuous challenge to realization of the gracious presence of the Holy Spirit."

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Come, Holy Spirit..."

## May 17, 2009

**Text: Ephesians 3:1-13**  
**"New Revelation in Christ"**

Four times in these thirteen verses, the biblical writer refers to a "mystery" (Ephesians 3:3, 4, 5, 9).

Most of the time, I think of a mystery as something to be solved; if I just had more information, I could figure it out. (Mrs. White committed the murder in the library with a rope, as we might suggest in the game "Clue.")

Many persons like to read murder mysteries, jumping at hints to try to solve the crime before getting to the final pages.

The writer of Ephesians is telling about another kind of mystery. It is not a mystery that we can solve by logic or data or facts. This word "mystery" in the New Testament is *mustērion*, coming literally from words that mean "shut the mouth." It is not something to be figured out but something to be gained by revelation.

One simplified English translation (used for a Russian version of the epistle) calls it "secret truth" (World Bible Translation Center edition).

But this mystery is not "secret knowledge" that is open only to a select few. In other words, this is not Gnosticism. It is a mystery hidden but now to be revealed to everyone (Ephesians 3:9).

Its revelation is in the life and work of Jesus Christ. Paul acknowledges that the mystery was unleashed to him in revelation (3:3). Part of that revelation is that the promise of Christ is both for Jews and Gentiles. (3:6). (That is everyone.)

That very variety and diversity in the life of the Church is itself a testimony to those who need to hear the gospel (3:10). A good question for us today is "Who is missing from the family Table?"

To the extent that we find (even enjoy) ways to put boundaries around God's grace, we have diminished the fullness of our testimony.

See "Bible study," page 13

### Let's Journey To....

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May adult Bible study

continued from page 12

Another way of putting that is that when the Church does not reflect the inclusiveness of God's message, the message is lessened.

I remember being asked by someone who was thinking about attending the church where I was pastor, "Are there folks there like me?"

Sociologically, I understand that question, but theologically it is painful to hear. In Ephesians, Paul reminds us that access to God is through Jesus Christ (3:12). We do well to let our lives be witness to that access.

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Biblical Proclamation for Africa Today* (Abingdon Press), John Wesley Zwomunondiita Kurewa quotes George Hendry: "In the New Testament, mystery is a secret which has been, or is being, disclosed; but because it is a divine secret it remains mystery and does not become transparent to (humankind)."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin, "O Holy Divine Mystery, in Jesus Christ You have shown Yourself to us..."

May 24, 2009

Text: Ephesians 5:21-6:4  
"New Life in the Home"

As often happens, I am writing these comments well before I receive a copy of the student or teacher book for the *Adult Bible Studies*.

It is likely that from time to time I blather on about something that is covered quite well in those materials. I just feel better for making that disclaimer!

This week, instead of a systematic or thematic look at the texts, I want to offer a series of relatively unrelated observations.

First, do you usually wear sandals, keep your hair uncut, and assiduously avoid eastern North Carolina barbecue? (Okay, folks in the western part of the state can substitute "avoid Lexington-style barbecue.")

These are cultural matters that have evolved or ratcheted forward (or backward depending on your point of view) from the time the New Testament was written.

How do you distinguish between the cultural shape of a text and its core revelation? What of relationships are culturally defined and what are divinely shaped?

Second, what is the significance that in Ephesians 5:21-6:9 the person with lesser social status is addressed first (wives, children, slaves). The tradition of that day would always be to speak first to the social superior (husbands, parents, masters).

In our day, a speaker will begin by addressing first the most prestigious person in the room ("Mr. President, Madam Governor, Mr. Speaker, and Ladies and Gentlemen..."). Why would Paul turn that value upside down and give the priority position to the one assumed to be the underdog?

Third, the word translated in the New Revised Standard Version as "reverence" (5:21) is *phōbōs*. Do you see our English word "phobia"? No wonder the King James Version translate the word as "fear"! This is fear in the sense of absolute awe.

Our relationship to one another is to be shaped not by our cozy ties with Jesus, but by the overwhelming awareness that these are different values, difference ways of love, a wholly otherness.

Unless Jesus turns upside down the way we usually relate to one another, perhaps, as George Whitefield once said, "You have been converted by me but not by Jesus Christ."

Finally, in the case of each relationship described in Ephesians 5:21-6:9, the context for forming that relationship is related to our link with the Lord. Whatever the tie between persons, it is to be with regard to the God who relates to us all.

What Someone Else Has Said:

In William P. Young's immensely popular novel, *The Shack* (Windblown Media), Sarayu, a character who speaks as the Holy Spirit, says "It is true that relationships are a whole lot messier than rules, but rules will never give you answers to the deep questions of the heart and they will never love you."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Teach me to love..."

May 31, 2009

Text: Ephesians 56:10-18  
"Equipped for New Life"

On this Memorial Day week-end, when those of us in the United States recall with gratitude the sacrifices made by those who have been sent to protect us, our Bible study uses military imagery to describe how the people of God find their ultimate protection in the Lord.

Armor (6:10, 13). Belt and breastplate (6:14). Boots (6:15). Shield (6:16). Helmet (6:17). Sword (6:17). How many times the Ephesians would have seen Roman soldiers dressed in such a way!

In addition to the spiritual advice given through these powerful metaphors (foe example, "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God"), there is a final bit of counsel.

In Ephesians 6:18, Paul tells his readers "to be alert." Literally, the New Testament word means "be sleepless."

For me, I'm not sure that being sleepless and staying alert go together! Nevertheless, the apostle's guidance is clear; it is not enough to be equipped for spiritual battle unless we know when it is time to fight!

The equipment for the saints is to be put on *before* the battle. Look at Ephesians 6:13: "Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand *on that evil day* and *having done everything*, to stand firm." I am to get spiritually prepared in advance.

It is what John Wesley called "means of grace": prayer, Scripture, frequent Communion, worship, fasting, holy conferencing, works of mercy. These are the ways Christians gain the grace for the ongoing battle against evil.

Wesley took issue with the Moravians of his day who argued that one should wait for the Lord to take action. Wesley asserted that God gave us grace to take action ourselves.

Note in this week's text the action words: put on, take up, stand, fasten, put on, put on, take, take, pray, keep

alert. These are hardly the instructions for passive living. Rather, these are a call to an active life of spiritual discipline, an invitation to take advantage of protective gifts offered by God.

What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Team Spirituality* (Abingdon Press), William J. Carter has included this: "The exploration of spirituality is not just for the enhancement of ministry, although it will surely achieve that. It is fundamentally for the union of humanity and the divine. Persons who know God are more able than persons who do not—but their ability is in the realm of the spirit and not the flesh....It is much easier for a spiritual person to gain proficiency than for a merely skilled person to gain spirituality."

Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Almighty God, before whom we bow in appreciation and in anticipation, hear our struggle to become all You would have us be and to be all You would have us become. Cover our places of vulnerability with protective grace..."

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## Event for Youth and Young Adults to Explore their Call to Ministry

EXPLORATION 2009, scheduled for Nov. 13-15 in Dallas, will address The United Methodist Church's need for young clergy by offering youth and young adults who feel God's call a chance to explore that call. "Today more than ever, the denomination needs to sponsor events that invite, train, and support young people as they answer their call to ordained ministry," said the Rev. Meg Lassiat, director of student ministries, vocation, and enlistment at the Board of Higher Education and Ministry, which sponsors EXPLORATION.

Aimed at high school seniors through young adults aged 24 who are considering a call to ordained ministry, EXPLORATION participants will have the chance to talk with admissions staff from the 13 United Methodist schools of theology, attend workshops, and take part in small-group discussions. For more information, or to register for EXPLORATION, please visit [www.gbhem.org/exploration](http://www.gbhem.org/exploration) or [www.explorecalling.org](http://www.explorecalling.org).

## Lay staff UM pension training

A presentation on the UM Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP) will be given by Peter Hang, benefits educator for Board of Pension and Health Benefits, on Tuesday, April 21, 10 am-12 noon at Hayes Barton UMC in Raleigh.

The presentation is organized for local church lay employees who participate in the UMPIP. Those planning to attend are asked to call Russell Wilcox at Hayes Barton UMC, 919-832-6435, so he will know the number of seats needed.

Details will be presented about the 403(b) retirement plan including the different funds available at The General Board Of Pension; how to check on individual personal investment elections (fund allocation); what individual distributions options are available; and how to check on individual risk tolerance for *LifeStage Investment Management Service* (free service offered by General Board of Pension.) Hang will also be available to meet privately to discuss any individual pension-related questions.

## Responding to Family Violence - Radical Hospitality: Risk-Taking Mission

The Board of Church & Society is sponsoring a one-day seminar April 25, at United Methodist Family Services, 3900 W. Broad St., Richmond, VA. The day will offer worship, Bible study, workshops and panel discussion that features victims of family violence. A special session will be for clergy-only and will provide hands-on tools for effective ministry. Registration is \$10. To register or for more information, please see the Virginia Conference Web site: <http://www.vaumc.org>. Select Events / April and click on the "Responding to Family Violence" entry for April 25.

## Youth Rally Day

Conference Youth Rally Day is Sunday, April 26 from 3-6 p.m. at NC Wesleyan College in Rocky Mount. Information is available at <http://nccumc.org/youth/events/rally-day/>. Pre-registration is not required.

## "Theology of the Body" seminar

A seminar for clergy and laity, "Theology of the Body: An Ecumenical Introduction," is planned on theological issues related to human sexuality, marriage, and human dignity. "Theology of the Body" is a book by John Paul II, which is composed of 130 his addresses. Dr. Paul J. Griffiths, the Warren Professor of Catholic Theology at Duke Divinity School, will provide the seminar's presentations. The event will take place in New Bern on May 21 from 9:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. For a registration form, go to [www.lifewatch.org](http://www.lifewatch.org) or call (252)-726-2175. This event is sponsored by the New Bern District of The United Methodist Church, Lifewatch, and Transforming Congregations.

## CLASSIFIEDS

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## conference CALENDAR

### April

- 4 UMW Executive Committee Meeting, 9:30am, Newton Grove UMC
- 17-19 Kaleidoscope for Middle School Youth
- 19 Festival of God's Creation (See page 16)
- 20 Stewardship Committee, 10:30am, UMB
- 23-24 Pre-Retirement Seminar; Little River Golf Resort, Carthage, NC
- 21 - 23 Academy of Christian Witness for Clergy, Camp Rockfish
- 26 Native American Ministries Sunday
- 26 Conference Youth Rally Day, NC Wesleyan College, Rocky Mount
- 27 Gathering of all elders, deacons, and local pastors, 9:30am, Jarvis Memorial UMC, Greenville

### May

- 1 World Day of Prayer/ May Friendship Day
- 5 Academy for Leadership Excellence Days of Learning, 9:30am, St. James UMC, Greenville
- 11 Conference Connectional Table, 10am, Methodist Building
- 13 Aging to Perfection Older Adult Event, St. James UMC; Greenville
- 15 - 16 Conference UMW Spiritual Enrichment Retreat, Haymount UMC, Fayetteville
- 23 NC Conference Historical Society

For more information on upcoming North Carolina Conference events, visit [www.nccumc.org](http://www.nccumc.org) and click on "Calendar."



# Around the CONFERENCE



Scotland Neck UMC recently honored Gene Todd for his 46 years of service as Lay Leader. Pictured L-R are: Bill Sherman, Gene Todd, Roger Cope, and G. Paul Phillips.

## Todd honored by Scotland Neck UMC

The Scotland Neck UMC honored Gene Todd on Sunday, Jan. 18 with a special recognition. Todd served the church for 46 years as the church Lay Leader before stepping down this year.

"His ministry inspired the laity to become more involved in their service to church and community," said pastor Roger Cope.

The church recognized his service with a surprise celebration which included special remembrances, a plaque, and a dinner.

Two former pastors, the Rev. Bill Sherman and Rev. G. Paul Phillips attended the service.

Todd's tenure began in 1962 while Sherman was pastor of the church. Todd continued to help lead the church during the Pastorates of: E.M. Thompson, C. Franklin Grill, G. Paul Phillips, Lewis Dillman, Sherwood Godwin, Rick Moser, William E. Holiday, David Spaulding, Sally Plowman, Chuck Plowman, and Roger D. Cope. He is now recognized as "Lay Leader Emeritus."



Slice of Hope diners were treated to desserts related to their table's theme.

## Elon youth take action from page 9

call their event "A Slice of Hope."

The sanctuary was transformed into a sea of color, with youth hosts flying this way and that in preparation for their guests. As diners arrived, they were escorted to their specially prepared seat, perhaps given Mardi Gras beads or a tropical lei or a special hat to wear. Themed desserts were delivered.

When everyone was served, Susan Graebe, Associate Director of ZOE Ministry was introduced to speak. She showed a film clip highlighting

the needs of orphans in many countries in Africa. The fun-filled evening turned into a meeting of concerned and yet hope-filled Christians. Before the night was over, hundreds of dishes were washed, thousands of calories consumed, and \$800 raised.

In addition, spirits had been lifted by the enthusiasm of a few young people, who believed that they could make a difference.

*\* Kristin Lassiter is minister of education at First UMC in Elon.*



Shown L-R are: Ellie Peek, Church Lay Leader, Betty Wilson, and Dr. A. Gene Cobb.

## Betty Wilson Library named at Epworth

Epworth UMC in Durham honored retiring church librarian, Betty Wilson, with a luncheon on Feb. 15. Wilson, who was married to Dr. Robert Wilson, a professor at Duke Divinity School, started working in the Epworth library in 1975.

She was instrumental in its development for the past 34 years as it grew from a simple card catalog to computerized system with over 5,000 volumes. Wilson gave of her time and energy to make the Epworth UMC

library a resource for all members.

A resolution was presented to the Church Council and passed on Feb. 23 which renames the church's library "The Betty Wilson Library and Multimedia Center."

The resolution states that she "endeavored to organize and maintain the church library for the benefit of people of every age and interest, and has always demonstrated the best qualities of genuine Christian hospitality, grace, wisdom, and love."

### IT'S A PIG PICKIN'

Wednesday • June 10th • 5:30-7:30 p.m.  
Cypress Glen Retirement Community  
100 Hickory Street • Greenville, N.C.

Meet the Directors!  
MAP AND DETAILS ON BACK

The Communities of The United Methodist Retirement Homes:  
Croasdale Village (Durham) • Cypress Glen (Greenville)  
Wesley Pines (Lumberton) • Wesley Ridge (Lumberton)  
Quail Haven Village (Pinehurst)

INVITE YOU TO A HOMETOWN PIG PICKIN'  
RSVP by May 30: (919) 384-3005 or 3006

## Welcome Delegates & Friends!

Instructions from the Convention Center:

1. Take Highway 264 East.
2. You will cross over Evans Street. Highway 43 and 14th Street.
3. Turn left at 10th Street. Go about two blocks and bear to the right onto 5th Street. Note: This street can be easily missed.
4. Keep on 5th Street until you see Hickory Street. There is a highway sign for Cypress Glen in front of Coats Wahl School.
5. Turn Right onto Hickory Street and you are there.

Takes about 12 minutes from the Convention Center.

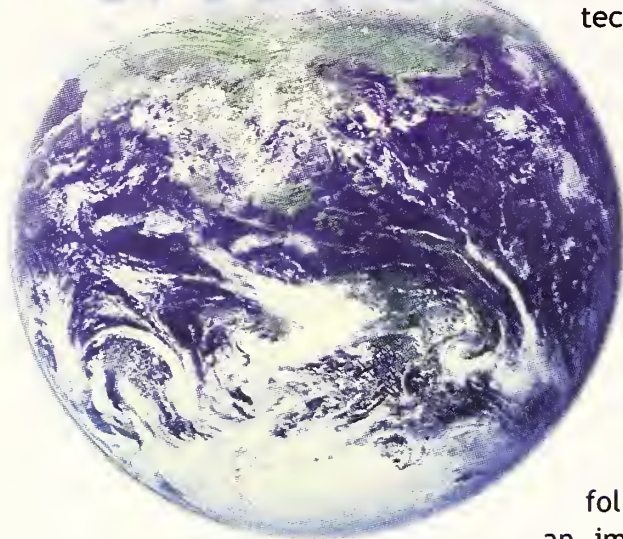
Shuttle Buses Provided from Convention Center 5:15-6:15 p.m.

The map shows a network of streets. Evans St. runs vertically on the left. Highway 264 runs diagonally from the bottom left towards the top right. Highway 43 runs horizontally across the middle. 10th Street and 14th Street run vertically, crossing Highway 264. 5th Street runs diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, crossing Highway 43. Cypress Glen Retirement Community is marked with a diamond at the intersection of Hickory Street and 5th Street. Other landmarks include the Convention Center, Greenville Square Shopping Center, and Coats Wahl School. Arrows indicate the route from the Convention Center to Cypress Glen.

Logos for various organizations are displayed at the bottom, including Life Care Services LLC, a cross symbol, a house symbol, and a circular logo with a person.



# Festival of God's Creation



## Going green.

It's the latest trend in everything from the food we eat to the places we live to the transportation we take to the products we use.

With the recent explosion of media attention to the environment, one might think that protecting the Earth is a new idea.

It's not.

In fact, Creation care is at the core of our Christian tradition.

When we read the Bible, we often focus on the relationship between humans and God.

Yet, the foundational stories of our faith reveal the importance of another set of relationships—the relationships between God and Creation and between humans and Creation.

From the ancient Israelites to the early followers of Christ, caring for the Earth was an important means of offering thanks and praise to God for God's Creation.

The deep relationship among God, humans, and the Earth is embedded in the Bible from the start, framing our understanding of who we are as people of God.

The two Creation stories of Genesis reveal a clear job description for humans: grow families and communities, care for the Earth as a just ruler would care for his kingdom, and till and keep the land (Genesis 1:27-31; 2:15).

This first job description framed the ancient Israelites' understanding of the relationship between the land, their God, and themselves.

The land belongs to God and God alone.

For the Israelites, the land represented the promise of God's favor, something that could be used, but not owned.

As a people with experiences of both possession and dispossession of land, they understood that land should be managed as a gift from God, rather than as human-owned property.

God tells the Israelites: "No land may be permanently bought or sold. It all belongs to me—it isn't your land, and you only live there for a little while" (Leviticus 25:23).

Unlike kings in surrounding regions, the king of Israel was expected to "manage the land as a gift entrusted to him but never possessed by him."

Humility and justice were to characterize human dominion, and the land was to be held and worked for the good of the community and the Creation.

They could secure abundance and peace by following God's rules for Creation: "Faithfully obey my laws, and I will send rain to make your crops grow... your harvest of grain and grapes will be so abundant that you won't know what to do with it all. You will eat and be satisfied, and you will live in safety" (Leviticus 26:3-5).

## STEWARDSHIP: The First Job Description

When we pray,  
"Give us this day our daily bread,"  
we recognize that the bread serves not only to sustain us, but also to empower us to serve others. As people of faith, we are commissioned to care for God's gifts in ways that ensure all have what they need, for present and future generations.

## Sunday, April 19

To celebrate God's gracious work in creating the earth and all living things

### Resources:

UM General Board of Church and Society. Go to [www.umc-gbcs.org](http://www.umc-gbcs.org) and select Calendar for the link to the Festival page.

Earth Day Network- includes links to local events  
[www.earthday.net](http://www.earthday.net)

US Government Earth Day Site  
[www.earthday.gov](http://www.earthday.gov)

### JESUS AND NATURE

Jesus' life and ministry expressed the fullness of God in the created world. Born in a stable and cradled in a manger, God became physically present with both humans and creatures.

At the start of his ministry, Jesus immersed himself the waters of baptism, symbolizing God's immersion in the human experience, and

sanctifying his ministry on Earth (Matt 3:13-17). Then, he traveled into the wilderness and up to a mountaintop, where he conquered temptation (Matt 4:1-11). Throughout his ministry, he displayed both power over and reverence for the Creation.

Jesus used examples from nature throughout his teachings to show how people should live in relationship to God, one another, and the bounty of the Earth. Birds serve as a model for trusting in God's provision (Matt 6:25-26; Luke 12:6-7), and trees represent

God's realm (Matt 13:31-32). He contrasted the lives of animals to his own itinerant life: "'Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man doesn't have a place to call his own'" (Luke 9:58).

Jesus also provided guidance about sustainability and the use of the Earth's bounty. Through stories like the Parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12:13-21), he taught that security comes not through hoarding commodities, but rather through relying on and helping to share God's provision for all of Creation.

In his teachings on the coming of God's realm, Jesus emphasized the importance of ensuring the bounty of the Earth are shared with the most vulnerable among us: the hungry, the thirsty, the sick, and all those in need (Matt 25:34-46).

This includes ensuring the treasures of God's Earth are available for future generations.

## Ways to Celebrate

- Family members or congregations can collect photos or draw pictures of their favorite outdoor places to create a group collage.
- Take advantage of moderate temperatures and eat a meal together outdoors. Stop and listen to the sounds of nature as part of your prayer before the meal.
- Save energy by unplugging appliances when not in use; encourage this in your church.
- Talk or write to church leaders, community leaders, and elected officials about improving efficiency in public spaces, strengthening environmental laws, and supporting the creation of community gardens.



## Conference Mission Team approves \$194,850 in seed funds

The NC Conference Mission Team recently approved \$194,850 in Mission Seed Funds to facilitate and encourage new ministries of risk-taking mission and radical hospitality in the local church.

Mission Seed Funds are meant to be supplemental funding that assists congregations and supported ministries in beginning new ministry that is directed along the Seven Pathways

& Four Foci with specific emphasis on equipping and empowering the congregation for hands-on ministry and witness beyond the walls of the church (Acts 1:8).

Forty-nine different local churches or ecumenical ministries sponsored by a local United Methodist church submitted applications for ministry of over \$300,000.

"All of the ministries were excellent, however, some were not new ministries or did not quite meet the parameters of the Mission Seed Fund program. The Mission Team had a very difficult job in deciding which ministries best met the Mission Seed Fund guidelines, looking at the Seven Pathways and the Four Foci," said Steve Taylor, conference director of Mission and Justice Ministries.

"The team further reviewed the ministry need and relevance in these areas, the level of United Methodist lay participation, the transformational nature of the ministry for the local church and the community, and whether the ministry was sustainable over a longer period of time. The Team would have liked to provide Seed Funds for all the applicants, but they had a budgetary limit of \$200,000," Taylor said.

"This is an excellent exam-

See "Mission seed grants" page 4



At All God's Children UMC in Aulander, the seed grant will help expand the church's outreach to include the parents of the at-risk children already in their program.

### Mission Seed Grant recipients

- All God's Children UMC - Connecting with parents of at-risk children
- Ann Street UMC - Loaves and Fishes multi-congregation effort addressing community needs
- Apex UMC - Community & Latino Ministry involves laypersons crossing denominational, cultural, and racial boundaries
- Avent Ferry UMC - Leadership Academy expands existing ministry for 9-10th graders with self-esteem support, academic nurturing, leadership development
- Belmont UMC - Excell After School Enrichment expands existing program into summer months as full-time camp including counseling, leadership training, Bible study.
- Edgerton Memorial - Willing Workers lay volunteers doing repairs
- First UMC Breakfast Ministry - FUMC Rocky Mount provides hot meals and time of devotion and prayer as outreach to homeless and working poor within community
- Haiti Reverse Mission - Garber UMC supports and offsets cost of ministry to youth and orphans in Haiti
- Jerusalem Ark - Trinity UMC, Fairmont outreach from UM congregations in NC to Palestinian Christian youth and young adults including leadership development and spiritual formation.
- Loaves & Fishes - Mebane is a new location for the Loaves and Fishes multi-congregational outreach

See "2009 seed grant recipients" page 4

## Ministries of MERCI are ongoing, hosting Confab

The Marion Edwards Recovery Center Initiative (MERCI) will host the annual "Confab" for non-profit organizations involved in the development or rehabilitation of affordable housing on May 13. Sponsored by The Duke Endowment, CONFAB will be held at the MERCI facility, 676 Community

Drive in Goldsboro. The topic for the event is "Managing Risks in Small Nonprofit Organizations," and the

facilitator is Melanie Herman, executive director of the Nonprofit Risk Management Center.

Also in May, the MERCI Board of Directors is sponsoring a Golf Tournament to raise awareness and funds for MERCI. Individuals and teams have been invited to be a part of the tournament to raise funds to support the MERCI ministry which relies on contributions.

In the same week, MERCI is host-

See "MERCI ministries" page 20



MERCI hosts trainings regularly at the facility in Goldsboro.



ABOVE: A grant to the Robeson County Church & Community Center supports new participation of United Methodist workteams.

BELOW: A grant helps the Rockingham District Native American Cooperative Ministry develop day care ministries for deeply impoverished areas of southern NC and northern SC.



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# ★ May Is National Military Appreciation Month ★

## ***New Bern District receives grant and training to begin ministry with veterans, active military and their families***

By Para Drake \*

Connecting pastors and congregations with families of deployed military, veterans, and those returning from service abroad is the goal of "Operation Compassion," recently launched in the New Bern District.

Superintendent Dennis Goodwin sums up his vision and implementation for this ministry, "Given that there are around 50,000 Marines and Sailors and...their families who live in the District and our communities, we understand this ministry to be a way to provide meaningful ministry to these persons at a time when their stress is great because of repeated deployments."

Operation Compassion recognizes the research that pastors of local congregations are five times more likely to be approached when military personnel and their families look for help.

The two-step process for orientation and training brings together pastors and health professionals for one day, followed by one day for congregations to come together.

Both provide experience with mili-

tary culture through stories shared by active and retired service members.

Project Compassion, a nonprofit organization based in Chapel Hill, provides orientation to care team ministry. James Brooks, director, offers the opportunity to reflect upon the gifts each person can share and direction in taking the first steps to create the congregation's care team ministry.

***"[This is] a way to provide meaningful ministry to these persons at a time when their stress is great because of repeated deployments."***

"Congregations who invest in this training and ministry will find its relevance for ministry within their community as they

experience the team approach to compassionate care," said Brooks.

When congregations are able to provide and deploy care teams to serve the military and their families, the ministry of compassion takes shape through the eight or so pairs of hands and feet that make up a team.

Each care team member takes on the ministry of "doing what she or he enjoys doing" so that the support may be cooking, playing games, nursing, lawn care, car maintenance, etc.

Goodwin describes Operation Compassion as "a ministry born through partnerships with Duke Endowment, Citizen Soldier Support



New Bern District superintendent, Dennis Goodwin, shares the vision of Operation Compassion. Goodwin serves as a Colonel in the Army Reserves and has been a chaplain in the U.S. Army and National Guard and Reserve for 28 years. He was deployed to Iraq for one year. The New Bern District has developed a workshop called "Working Miracles in People's Lives: Connecting the Faith Community and Behavioral Health Professionals Service Members and Their Families" to prepare churches to receive and minister to military personnel, veterans, and their families.

Program, Project Compassion, and the New Bern District. Its goal is to help churches reach the veterans, active duty military families, and the

reserve families that reside within the boundaries of the district."

Reflecting upon the program for communities and congregations, Goodwin notes, "...we realize this area has many veterans of prior wars and conflicts who continue to need the kind of love that the church best provides. Already, some churches have caught the vision by receiving small group training from our partners at Project Compassion. We rejoice that God is allowing us to share this ministry in such a time as this."

Pastors and congregations with little experience with the military can find confidence in their ministry through the efforts of Program Coordinator, William E. Spencer, Jr., retired military himself.

He is available to meet with congregations and pastors who want to learn more about the program before committing to it.

A member of Richlands UMC in the New Bern District, Spencer may be contacted at wes Spencer@embarq-mail.com or the New Bern District web site <http://nbdumc.org>.

\* Para Drake is pastor of Core Creek UMC in the New Bern District.

### ***For More Information:***

#### **New Bern District - Military Support Page**

<http://www.nbdumc.org> and select "Military Support"

#### **General Board of Higher Education and Ministry**

[www.tinyurl.com/gbhem-military-ministry](http://www.tinyurl.com/gbhem-military-ministry)

See sections on *Military Ministry Assistance, Telling our Stories, Worship Resources, & Website Links*

Resources include:

- An Order for Welcoming Service Members Returning from War
- An Order for Blessing Service Members Deploying to War

#### **Beyond the Yellow Ribbon - Bringing Soldiers and their Families All the Way Home**

A program of the Minnesota National Guard

[http://www.dma.state.mn.us/returning\\_troops/btyr\\_overview.php](http://www.dma.state.mn.us/returning_troops/btyr_overview.php)

#### **National Military Appreciation Month**

<http://www.nmam.org/>

#### **Phone Cards for the Troops**

<http://tinyurl.com/umc-phone-cards>



# ★ May Is National Military Appreciation Month ★

## Preparing churches to receive returning military personnel

By Kathy L. Gilbert \*

A young man knocks softly on a pastor's door.

"Sir, do you have a moment?"

His bearing and haircut alert the pastor that the young man is probably a soldier who has returned from war. The next few minutes are critical if the pastor wants to see this man in church again.

"It will take courage to listen to him and patience," said the Rev. Laura Bender, a United Methodist Navy chaplain.

"Refrain from giving easy answers. Remember your love for him transcends your position on war."

Bender and a panel of chaplains talked to participants at the April JustPeace Conference about "Trauma Healing: Preparing Churches to Receive Returning Military Personnel." Bender, command chaplain of the USS New York, Norfolk, Va., has designed worship material for The United Methodist Church to help churches welcome soldiers returning from war.

The conference was sponsored by JustPeace, a center for mediation and conflict transformation affiliated with the United Methodist Board of Discipleship, and the Board of Higher Education and Ministry and the United Methodist Endorsing Agency.

Bender cautioned pastors and church members who want to help a soldier reintegrate into civilian life to remember these men and women returning from Iraq and other wars have a new worldview and are wise beyond their years.

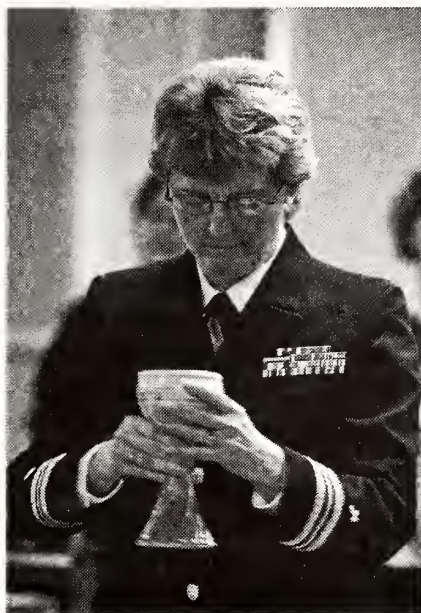
"They have seen dangers few can imagine," she said. "Don't take the visit lightly. They are probably feeling betrayed, enraged—but they probably developed a deep trust in God that got them through their experiences."

The young man or woman knocking on that pastor's door will be testing them, she said. A pastor's initial response, understanding of military language and ability to listen will be assessed in the first few minutes.

"His or her (soldier) survival was an act of God and they need a way to claim their faith," she said, noting that many returning vets refuse to speak to anyone about their experiences who has not been to war.

### Wounds, grief and guilt

Bender served at a field hospital in Iraq and recalls talking with a wounded 19-year-old soldier struggling to come to terms with a battle-



United Methodist Navy Chaplain the Rev. Laura Bender blesses the elements of Holy Communion during worship at the 2009 JustPeace conference. She has designed worship material to help churches welcome soldiers returning from war for The United Methodist Church. (UMNS photo by Kathy L. Gilbert)

field decision. He was crying as the doctors tended to a bullet wound in his knee. "I said, 'That probably hurts a lot.' He shook his head. 'No, that's not the painful part.'"

Two Iraqis had attacked the young soldier and three other 19-year-olds in his troop. Each Iraqi held a little girl in front of him as a shield.

"I asked him what he did, and he said he did what his training had taught him to do. That meant he killed all four," she said. "But it also meant he saved the lives of the three other 19-year-olds that were with him."

Returning warriors are dealing with grief and guilt that can be triggered by a sight, sound, or smell.

Bender recalled being at the bedside of a soldier when he died "an awful death."

Word got back to the man's wife that Bender had been with him when he died. The woman wanted to meet the chaplain, to hear about her husband's last moments of life.

"I forever became that horrible chaplain who refused to speak to a grieving wife," she said. "I couldn't tell her he died peacefully." Though she didn't know it, the woman was also Bender's mail carrier. "I was traumatized every time I got mail."

### Long road home

"I haven't felt the presence of God since Vietnam, and I am ordained," said the Rev. Paul Womack, pastor of Hurlbut Memorial Community UMC at Chautauqua Institution, NY.

Womack served in Vietnam as an interrogator with the 25th Infan-

try Division from 1969-70 and re-entered military service as a reserve chaplain in 1988. He was deployed for Operation Desert Storm in 1990-91 and spent additional time on active duty between 2003 and 2005 including a deployment to Iraq. He retired from the reserves in 2007 after serving as staff chaplain for the 98th Division.

"I do not want the church to change our position on war," said the Rev. Dennis Goodwin, currently serving as a district superintendent in North Carolina. He previously served for 28 years as a chaplain in the U.S. Army on active duty and in the National Guard and Reserve.

"We are church who seeks peace, and we seek it clearly but it is an impediment to the warrior," he said. "Our position keeps us from speaking with as clear a message as our heart might want us to speak."

The Rev. David Anderson Hooker, director on the board of JustPeace, cautioned participants that not everyone returning from war is traumatized.

He proposed asking returning

military personnel to teach us about what they have been through.

"I wonder what might happen if we offered them an invitation to teach those of us who have never been to hell what and how you witness the presence of God in the space between death and life," he asked.

"What if they weren't treated as the thing to be fixed but given the opportunity to be seized for the rest of us? Invite them into a conversation not to fix them but to prepare us in ways that we might otherwise not be prepared for because we don't have those experiences. I believe conversations change lives."

Goodwin said there is an easy way to support anyone who has been in a war or a family who has a loved one in a war.

"Just thank them," he said. "There are World War II, Korean and Vietnam veterans who have never heard someone say, 'Thank you, from the bottom of my heart.'"

\* Kathy Gilbert is a news writer for UM News Service in Nashville, Tenn.

## Nina

Hometown: Plevan, Bulgaria

There's a small Methodist Church in Plevan, Bulgaria, that needed help. As luck would have it, members of Greensboro's West Market Street United Methodist Church set out on a mission trip to Plevan to assist. But they did more than help rebuild a church, they helped build a new life for the minister's daughter, Nina Blazheva, now a sophomore business major at Greensboro College. She's pursuing her degree just a short distance from the church that made it all happen and where she also now sings in the choir. Nina's also taking part in the college's Village 401 community service program and helping other international students adjust to life in the U.S. Nina's happy the way things turned out. And so are we.



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# Mission seed grants awarded to 36 ministries *continued from page 1*

ple of how the connectional church facilitates substantial broad-based ministry through its apportioned dollars. All of these outreach efforts were transformational, discipling, and will encourage further ministry."

"We know that these ministry dollars will turn over up to 10 times through the hands and feet of servant volunteers. The hungry will be fed, the homeless will know shelter, and the lost will hear the good news of Jesus Christ. I am so proud of our United Methodist folks moving into their communities and transforming the world for Jesus," Taylor said.

Training sessions for churches

interested in applying for a grant in the 2010 Seed Fund cycle are scheduled for Saturday, Aug. 22, and Tuesday, Sept. 29, 2009. Locations will be announced and will be in separate areas of the Conference for easier access.

During the training, application guidelines, submission forms, and reporting parameters will be discussed. Churches are highly encouraged to attend in order that they will better understand the ministry process and parameters.

## 4 Areas of Focus

The United Methodist Church has identified four areas of focus:

- Developing principled Christian leaders for the church and the world
- Creating new places for new people and revitalizing existing congregations
- Engaging in ministry with the poor
- Combating the diseases of poverty by improving health globally.

## 2009 mission seed grant recipients *continued from page 1*

### The 7 Pathways

The Council of Bishops developed The Seven Pathways as a way to highlight fruitful practices within United Methodism.

1. Teaching the Wesleyan model of reaching and forming disciples of Jesus Christ;
2. Strengthening clergy and lay leadership;
3. Developing new congregations;
4. Transforming existing congregations;
5. Ending racism and authentically expanding racial and ethnic ministries;
6. Reaching and transforming the lives of new generations of children;
7. Eliminating poverty in community with the poor.

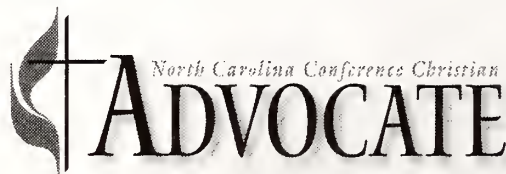
- **MERCI** - Home Repair supports materials purchases for local congregation mission teams doing home repair for persons in poverty
- **Natimba** - Mission Development & Interpretation develops multimedia presentations for mission across developing nations. Serves missionaries as a way to interpret story.
- **New Bern District** - Working Miracles in Peoples Lives is a district-wide activity focused on local churches in outreach to military families.
- **Oleander** - Common Threads outreach to Hispanic/Latino community and includes sewing ministry and materials/machine purchases.
- **Person Street** - Breakfast Buddies offers non-perishable meals for children and program is expanding into summer months.
- **Person Street** - Healing Hunger ministry which offers non-perishable food packets to homeless persons and offers soup kitchen monthly.
- **Person Street** - Poor Persons Pantry involves 50% of the church's congregation in converting a basement into a food pantry and thrift shop.
- **Pine Forest UMC** - Volunteer Spirit Food for Afghanistan outreach supports US Air Force volunteers packing food for Stop Hunger Now.
- **Pinetops** - Cooking Academy engages community children in cooking,

educates on nutrition, Christian love and principles.

- **Pinetops** - Woman's Health Fair outreach to provide health education and spiritual guidance for women in the community.
- **Pittsboro, First UMC** - Habitat for Humanity - Family Resource Center offers conflict resolution, tutoring, family services.
- **Robeson County Church & Community Center** - Workteam Ministry supports new participation of United Methodist workteams.
- **Rockingham District** Native American Cooperative Ministry Day Care develops day care ministry for deeply impoverished areas of south NC and north SC.
- **Rockingham District** Partners In Ministry - Youth program offers year-long mentoring and leadership training with high school juniors.
- **Rockingham Outreach & Recovery** - rehabilitates homes in Rockingham District; grant funds materials for six projects.
- **SEJANAM** - Youth/Young Adult Empowerment Trip supplements cost for eight youth/young adults to participate in Bolivia mission trip.
- **Shepherd House** - After School Center provides help with homework, encouragement, arts/cultural programs. Outreach to gangs and at-risk children.

Collaboration of four UM churches and Duke Divinity School.

- **Sunrise** - Community Home Repair involves laypeople in home repairs needed in the community.
- **The Peace** - Active Parenting expands active parenting education model offered in all 12 districts.
- **The Peace** - Marital Enrichment program will initially focus in four districts of the NC Conference.
- **Trinity UMC** - Goldsboro Elementary School Ministry prayer program focuses on schools in the community.
- **Trinity UMC (Red Springs)** - Feeding Jesus on Weekends offers meals on wheels on Saturdays.
- **Windbourne** - Open Hearts, Open Homes program developing Russian Bible Study to expand on ongoing ministry for children from Belarus who come for a 6-week recuperation trip to the US.
- **Wrightsboro** - Our Father's Garden teaches poor persons in the community agricultural skills to help them find work.
- **Zion UMC** - Gate Gleans garden surplus will go to the food pantry and be distributed throughout the community.
- **ZOE Ministry** expands empowerment and life-skills ministry with high risk vulnerable children in Africa and connects US-based congregations with these activities.



### Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org).

Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

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# Wesleyan Wisdom: Bishops address hopes, concerns A commentary

By Donald W. Haynes

A panel of four active United Methodist bishops at a Duke University Divinity School convocation provided a rare glimpse into the soul and brain of our denomination's episcopal leadership.

Bishop Gregory Palmer, president of the Council of Bishops; Bishop Janice Riggle Huie, past president; Bishop Larry Goodpaster, president-elect; and Bishop Al Gwinn, one of the hosts, candidly shared their vision, concerns and hopes. Dean Gregory Jones of Duke Divinity School moderated the discussion.

When asked, "What is not working [in the denomination]?" bishops' answers included: the Boards of Ordained Ministry, the appointment system, Charge Conference, general agencies and "our antiquated communication system."

Dean Jones turned to the audience and said, "Wow, what's left standing?"

A follow-up question was, "What keeps you awake at night?" And another on effective ministry was, "Share with us where in your area it's happening."

The bishops' candor and responses were impressive, and at times, emotionally moving. Applause broke out time after time.

Council President Bishop Palmer of Illinois stated the overarching concern of the panel: "Institutional preservation is our unstated mission." We need only to follow the money to determine what our denominational mission is: clergy benefits, from the highest levels of the connection to the churches of smallest membership.

Indeed, I saw a study done several years ago by one of our general board staff members that compared the "costs of doing business" in the rapidly growing Pentecostal churches and The United Methodist Church. His conclusion documented Bishop Palmer's point, that clergy support is our primary mission.

Far too often, our churches function like religious clubhouses marked by "sociological sameness," and our clergy mimic institutional executives with what has been described as an "edifice complex"—spending all day in the office. Too few spend any time in mobile home parks and government housing projects in the shadow of our steeples.

Why did the bishops think the interview process conducted by Boards of Ordained Ministry with candidates is "not working"?

One bishop said that board interviews focus too much on seminary work in doctrine and homiletics and not enough on John Wesley's original question, "Have ye fruits?"

It is a very valid point.

I meet annually with seminary graduates who were turned down by a Board of Ordained Ministry. Sometimes it is because of the poor video technology available when they tape their sermon in a small rural church. Sometimes it is because they sat up all night with a parish family before their oral examination.

Sometimes the articulation of theological answers three years after seminary does not satisfy the demands of a board member who read the papers, yet we know the young candidate is being more effective in her or his parish than is the inquisitor!

The process of interviewing benefits some personality types and punishes others.

Why do we follow that corporate model in culling out pastors?

Why not hear more from those who have received the grace of the pastor's radical

outreach—parishioners, recent new members, grief victims or the poor?

The General Boards of Ordained Ministry may indeed be asking for the right answer to the "wrong" questions.

Bishop Al Gwinn of the North Carolina Conference correctly nailed the obsolescence of the Charge Conference as "measuring input" when we should be "measuring output."

If the state of the church were accurately documented by what superintendents hear each fall at Charge Conferences, United Methodists would be growing in depth, outreach, caring community and numbers.

All required data could be faxed or e-mailed on Dec. 31 to the district office, rather than compiled at some artificial moment that corresponds to the date of Charge Conference.

Laity across the connection figured out long ago that the decisions ratified by Charge Conference were made earlier by the Church Council, usually with more honest debate by a more representative number of laity.

Recognizing the redundancy, laity will come only in response to pastoral cajoling or loyalty to the tradition.

An alternative, in my opinion, would be to have a Church Conference that allowed every church member to participate in the election of all lay leadership for the ensuing year, presided over by the pastor or

another elder.

Decisions about clergy remuneration or a contractual "contract" relative to apportionments should go directly from Church Council to the district office.

The district superintendent should visit every church, not just every charge, throughout the year. The D.S. should be on site, asking questions and listening. And questions should focus not on institutional preservation but on radical outreach and hospitality, bringing people into a disciplined relationship with Jesus Christ and enhancing the transformational vitality of the parish.

While there, the D.S. should have an executive meeting with the Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee and leave with an appraisal of the pastor's work and relationships. That meeting should be followed with one-on-one time with the pastor, followed by a signed covenant of what strengths and concerns were discussed and what redemptive follow-up was agreed upon.

During the discussion, Bishop Huie at one point pulled the mic close to

**"We must learn how to be focused on mission as the focus of the appointment-making process. We have too few hits, too many misses and a long string of errors."**

her lips and said, "The appointment system is not working." She pointedly observed that, "The appointment system

was set up during a former time of stability and homogeneity."

As she sorts the profiles submitted to her cabinet each year by laity and clergy, she finds a disconnect between their expectations!

"We must learn how to be focused on mission as the focus of the appointment-making process," Bishop Huie said. Her colleagues concurred with her conclusion: "We have too few hits, too many misses and a long string of errors."

Bishop Goodpaster observed: "We need to be more nimble. We are stuck in a hierarchical, 1950s system. We must become more attentive to the local church."

Through this column, I have repeatedly called for a more collegial process in mission-focused appointment making. If we do not give church laity a more prominent place

See "Bishops address concerns" page 20

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## AC Briefing Sessions coming May 16, 17 in three locations

Briefing Sessions for the 2009 Annual Conference will be held Saturday, May 16, 10 a.m.-noon at Queen Street UMC in Kinston and 2:30-4:30 p.m. at Hay Street UMC in Fayetteville. Another session is scheduled for Sunday, May 17, 3-5 p.m. at Highland UMC in Raleigh. Both clergy and lay members of Annual Conference should attend one of the three sessions.

Thirty-two proposed constitutional amendments, approved at the 2008 General Conference of The United Methodist Church, will be voted on at the North Carolina Annual Conference, June 10-13 in Greenville.

Arthur Jones and Eddie Fox will be at each briefing session to present their views on the amendments and the impact they might have on The United Methodist Church.

In addition, the sessions will include information about the 2011 budget, other matters requiring conference action, and an agenda that is different from past years. The new agenda incorporates workshops and presentations for learning.

Jones, a member of the North Texas Conference, served as a member of the legislative committee that approved the amendments at the 2008 General Conference. He was active in shaping the committee's recommendation.

Fox is world director of Evangelism, The World Methodist Council. He served as a delegate to the 1996, 2000, 2004, and 2008 General Conferences. He has preached and lectured in more than 85 countries and has spoken in national and international conferences and convocations of evangelism and youth.

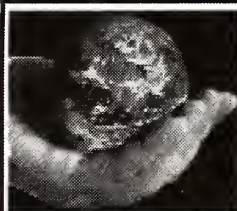


With seating for over 1,200 persons, the new worship facility at Covenant UMC will host the clergy executive session and allow more space for both the clergy and the laity executive sessions.

## Covenant UMC in Winterville to host clergy executive session on Wednesday, June 10

Covenant UMC in Winterville, several miles from the Greenville Convention Center, was named the site for the clergy executive session, 10 a.m. on June 10. The session is held prior to the beginning of the 2009 Annual Conference. Covenant will host the gathering in its new worship facility which opened in early April with over 1,100 people attending the opening worship service.

Lay members of the annual conference will meet at 10 a.m. executive session in the Greenville Convention Center. Registration for lay members will begin at 8 a.m. in the convention center. Registration for clergy begins at 8 a.m. at Covenant on June 10. After the clergy executive session, any remaining registration packets will be available in the Greenville Convention Center.



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# Annual Conference 2009: Constitutional Amendments

## Conferences consider amendments to change church structure, membership, clergy participation in delegates' election

By Linda Green \*

United Methodists meeting in this year's annual sessions will vote on 32 proposed constitutional amendments, many of them related to the denomination's structure as a global body.

Members of the 62 U.S. annual conferences and the 73 conferences in Africa, Europe and Asia will consider a total of 32 amendments.

### Church's worldwide nature

Approved earlier by the delegates to the 2008 United Methodist General Conference, annual conference members will consider 23 amendments, proposed by the Task Force on the Worldwide Nature of the Church, for the creation of regional conferences to establish a uniform denominational structure.

The legislation would make it possible to create a U.S. regional conference in the future if the amendments are passed by two-thirds of the votes in all conferences.

In October 2008, the Judicial Council, the Supreme Court of the denomination, ruled that even with approval of the amendments, the U.S. would not become a separate regional conference unless the 2012 General Conference enacts enabling legislation.

### Other amendments

The remaining nine amendments are related to church and conference membership; annual and jurisdictional conference composition, including boundaries; inclusiveness of the church; representation of newly created conferences at general, jurisdictional and central conferences; the judicial council; episcopal elections; fiduciary responsibility; and clergy participation in the elec-

tion of delegates to general, jurisdictional and central conferences.

"Amendments may be debated, but may not be amended," said the Rev. L. Fitzgerald Reist, II, secretary of the General Conference.

Voting on changes to the church's constitution occurs in the year fol-

lowing General Conference to provide annual conferences with time to familiarize themselves with the proposed amendments, he said.

"This is an attempt by the General Conference to be flexible and respond more appropriately in a rapidly changing world," Reist added.

All constitutional amendments must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the total number of voting members of all annual conferences worldwide. The Council of Bishops is expected to announce the results during its 2010 spring meeting.

### Bigger voice for clergy

If annual conferences approve proposed Constitutional Amendment 19, deacons, associate members and provisional members may join ordained ministers in full connection in voting for clergy delegates to general, jurisdictional and central conferences.

To be eligible to vote, local pastors must have completed the course of study or master of divinity degree and have served under appointment for two consecutive years immediately preceding an election.

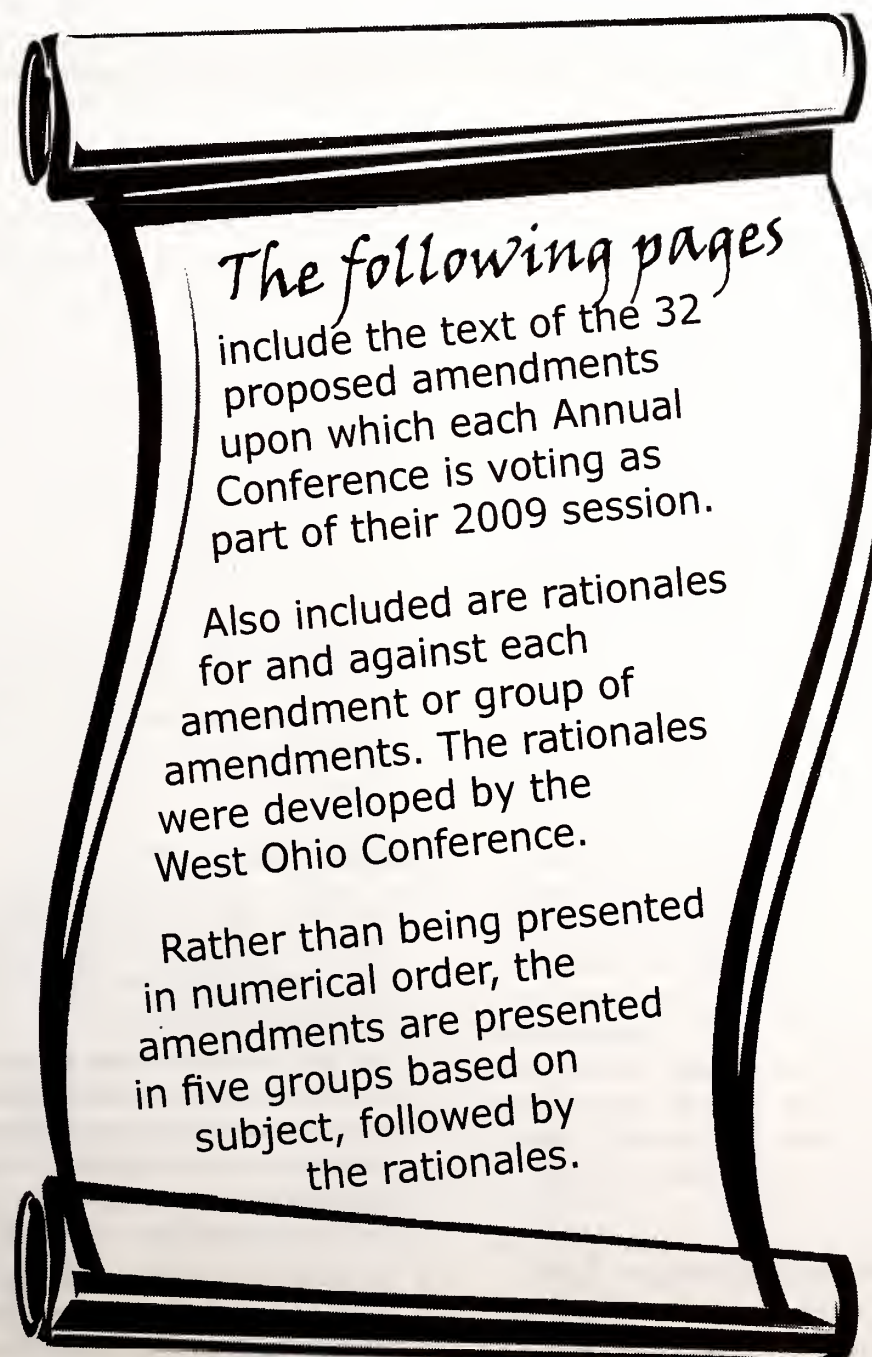
Another proposed amendment would allow lay people on the committee on investigation to vote on matters of ordination, character and conference relations of clergy.

### The basic unit

The annual conference is the "basic unit" of the church, according to the denomination's *Book of Discipline*. It may include an entire state, part of a state or even parts of two or more states.

During the annual conference gatherings in the United States, Africa, Europe and the Philippines, one-year appointments of all conference clergy members are announced. New deacons and elders are ordained, candidates for ordination approved, special projects and ministries recognized and budgets are set. A bishop presides over each annual session.

\* Linda Green is a UM News Service news writer based in Nashville, Tenn.





# Group 1

## Proposed Constitutional Amendments on the Worldwide Nature of the Church: Amendments IV, X, XXIII, XXVI

### Proposed Constitutional Amendment – IV

On May 1, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 593 Yes, 295 No. It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section I, ¶ 10, *Article III*, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section I, ¶ 10, *Article III*) amend by deletion and addition, as follows: Delete “central” before “conferences” and add “regional”, and delete “for the church outside the United States of America” before “and” and add “(The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)” at end of the paragraph. If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 10 (¶ 10) would read: There shall be regional conferences and, if necessary, provisional regional conferences, all with such powers, duties and privileges as are hereinafter set forth. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

### Proposed Constitutional Amendment – X

On May 1, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 649 Yes, 195 No. It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section V, and ¶ 28, *Article I*, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section V, and ¶ 28, *Article I*) amend by deletion and addition, as follows: Delete “central” before “Conferences” and add “Regional” before “Conferences” in the heading of Section V. Delete “shall” before “be” and add “may” before “be” and delete “central” before “conferences” and add “regional” before “conferences” and delete “outside the United States of America” before “with” in the first sentence. Delete the second sentence. Delete “Subsequently” at the beginning of the third sentence and delete “central” before “conferences” and add “regional” before “conferences” in the third and fourth sentences, and add “(The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)” at end of the paragraph. If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, the heading of Section V and ¶ 28 (¶ 28) would read: Section V. Regional Conferences ¶ 28. *Article I*.-There may be regional conferences for the work of the Church with such duties, powers, and privileges as are hereinafter set forth. The General Conference shall have authority to change the number and boundaries of regional conferences. The regional conferences shall have the duties, powers, and privileges hereinafter set forth. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

### Proposed Constitutional Amendment – XXIII

On May 1, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 590 Yes, 255 No. It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote.

In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section VII, ¶ 38, *Article II*, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section VII, ¶ 38, *Article II*) amend by deletion and addition, as follows: After “Church” delete “outside the United States of America” and after “into” delete “central” and after “into” add “regional” and after “determined” delete “by the Uniting Conference,” and after “Conference” delete “having authority subsequently to make changes in the number and boundaries.” and add “(The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)” at end of the paragraph. If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 38 (¶ 38) would read: The work of the Church may be formed into regional conferences, the number and boundaries of which shall be determined by the General Conference. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

### Proposed Constitutional Amendment – XXVI

On May 1, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 560 Yes, 275 No. It is now presented

### Proposed Amendment – XXVI Continued

to the Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division Three, ¶ 48, *Article IV*, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division Three, ¶ 48, *Article IV*) amend by deletion and addition, as follows: Before “conference” delete “central” and before “conference” add “regional” and following “Bishops” delete “, and such” and following “Bishops” add “In regional conferences where there are jurisdictional conferences, the jurisdictional colleges shall arrange the plan of episcopal supervision of the annual conferences, missionary conferences and missions within their jurisdictions. In regional conferences where there are no jurisdictional conferences, the regional conference” and add “(The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)” at end of the paragraph. If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 48 (¶ 48) would read:

The bishops of each jurisdictional and regional conference shall constitute a College of Bishops. In regional conferences where there are jurisdictional conferences, the jurisdictional colleges shall arrange the plan of episcopal supervision of the annual conferences, missionary conferences and missions within their jurisdictions. In regional conferences where there are no jurisdictional conferences, the regional conference College of Bishops shall arrange the plan of episcopal supervision of the annual conferences, missionary conferences, and missions within their respective territories. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

## Rationale For and Against Group 1 Amendments

These proposed constitutional amendments allow the General Conference to create similar structures for all of our world-wide church. Each Annual Conference would belong to a Regional Conference. In the United States a Regional Conference would be able to organize sub-units called Jurisdictional Conferences.

### Rationale FOR

- Currently, economic and political power in The United Methodist Church is centered in the United States. This damages our witness as the body of Christ and disempowers central conferences.
- Creating the possibility of similar structures across our worldwide denomination will enable the witness of the global community of faith within our connectional spirit and structure, increase a sense of parity in decision-making across the UMC, and strengthen on-going discussion about specific structural changes to be proposed.
- The proposed constitutional amendments do not change our jurisdictions within the United States, change the way bishops are elected or assigned, or change the way the Social Principles are decided upon or amended.
- The proposed amendments prepare the way for The United Methodist Church in the U.S. to be structured as a “regional conference or regional conferences” (per Judicial Council ruling 1100). This structure would provide a venue for The United Methodist Church in the U.S. to address issues unique to this nation.

### Rationale AGAINST

- No specific plan for restructuring of The United Methodist Church around “regional conferences” has been presented or agreed upon. The passage of these amendments requiring the creation of regional conference (s) in the United States is premature.
- The United Methodist Constitution requires a super-majority for passage of amendments to ensure that fundamental revisions of our doctrine, polity and missional structure are not made without clear understanding of the new directions being proposed. Passage of these amendments will clear away this protective standard and allow a future General Conference to enact sweeping changes by a simple majority.
- The creation of a regional conference centered in the United States may cause an inward focus and create greater distance in the relationship between The United Methodist Church in the United States and The United Methodist Church in other parts of the world.



# Group 2

## ***Proposed Constitutional Amendments on the Worldwide Nature of the Church Dealing Primarily with the Name Change: Amendments III, V, VII, XI, XII, XIII, XIV, XVI, XVIII, XX, XXI, XXIV, XXV, XXVII, XXVIII, XXIX, XXX, XXXI, XXXII***

### ***Proposed Constitutional Amendment – III***

On May 1, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 629 Yes, 248 No. It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section I, ¶ 9, *Article II*, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section I, ¶ 9, *Article II*) amend by deletion and addition as follows: Delete “central” before conference and add “regional”. At the end of the paragraph, add the parenthetical note, “(The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)” If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 9 (¶ 9) would read: There shall be jurisdictional conferences for the Church in the United States of America, with such powers, duties, and privileges as are hereinafter set forth; provided that in The United Methodist Church there shall be no jurisdictional or regional conference based on any ground other than geographical and regional division. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

### ***Proposed Constitutional Amendment – V \****

On May 1, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 629 Yes, 248 No. It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section II, ¶ 15, *Article III*, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section IV, ¶ 15, *Article III*) amend by deletion and addition, as follows: Add “regional and” before “jurisdictional” and delete “and “central” before “conferences”, delete “central” before “conference”, and add “(The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)” at end of the paragraph. If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 15 (¶ 15) would read: The General Conference shall fix the ratio of representation in the General, regional and jurisdictional conferences from the annual conferences, missionary conferences, and the provisional annual conferences, computed on a two-factor basis: (1) the number of clergy members of the annual conference and the missionary conference, and (2) the number of professing members in the annual conference, and the missionary conference, provided that each annual conference, missionary conference, or provisional annual conference shall be entitled to at least one clergy and one lay delegate in the General Conference and also in the jurisdictional or regional conference. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

### ***Proposed Constitutional Amendment – VII***

On May 1, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 629 Yes, 248 No. It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section II, ¶ 16, *Article IV*, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section II, ¶ 16, *Article IV*) amend by deletion and addition, as follows: In ¶ 16.3 and 16.10 delete “central” before “conferences” and add “regional”, and add “(The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)” at end of the 16.10. If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 16.3 and .10 (¶ 16.3 and .10) would read: 3. To define and fix the powers and duties of annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, missionary conferences and missions, and of regional conferences, district conferences, charge conferences, and congregational meetings. 10. To fix a uniform basis upon which bishops shall be elected by the jurisdictional conferences and to determine the number of bishops that may be elected by regional conferences. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

### ***Proposed Constitutional Amendment – XI***

On May 1, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 629 Yes, 248 No. It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section V, ¶ 29, *Article II*, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section V, ¶ 29, *Article II*) amend by deletion and addition, as follows: Delete “central” before “conferences” and add “regional” before “conferences” in the first sentence and add “(The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)” at end of the paragraph. If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 29 (¶ 29) would read: The regional conferences shall be composed of as many delegates as shall be determined by a basis established by the General Conference. The delegates shall be clergy and lay in equal numbers. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

### ***Proposed Constitutional Amendment – XII***

On May 1, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 749 Yes, 119 No. It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section V, ¶ 30, *Article III*, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section V, ¶ 30, *Article III*) amend by deletion and addition, as follows: Delete “central” before “conferences” and add “regional” before “conferences” in the first sentence. Delete the second sentence and add “(The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)” at end of the paragraph. If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 30 (¶ 30) would read: The regional conferences shall meet within the year succeeding the meeting of the General Conference at such times and places as shall have been determined by the preceding respective regional conferences or by commissions appointed by them or by the General Conference. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

### ***Proposed Constitutional Amendment – XIII***

On May 1, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 544 Yes, 252 No. It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section V, ¶ 31, *Article IV*, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section V, ¶ 31, *Article IV*) amend by deletion and addition, as follows: Delete “central” before “conferences” and add “regional” before “conferences” in the first sentence. Add “In those regional conferences where there are no jurisdictional conferences,” at the beginning of ¶ 31.2 and delete “central” before “conferences” and add “regional” before “conferences.” Add “In those regional conferences where there are jurisdictional conferences, bishops shall be elected by the respective jurisdictional conferences.” Delete “central” before “conferences” and add “regional” before “conferences” in ¶ 31.3, .6, and .7 and add “(The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)” at end of the paragraph. If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 31 (¶ 31) would read: The regional conferences shall have the following powers and duties and such others as may be conferred by the General Conference: 1. To promote the evangelistic, educational, missionary, social-concern, and benevolent interests and institutions of the Church within their own boundaries. 2. In those regional conferences where there are no jurisdictional conferences, to elect the bishops for the respective regional conferences in number as may be determined from time to time, upon a basis fixed by the General Conference, and to cooperate in carrying out such plans for the support of their bishops

\* See page 16: “If both Amendments V and VI are adopted”



# Group 2 continued

## Proposed Amendments on the Worldwide Nature of the Church Dealing Primarily with the Name Change:

### Proposed Amendment – XIII Continued

as may be determined by the General Conference. In those regional conferences where there are jurisdictional conferences, bishops shall be elected by the respective jurisdictional conferences. 3. To establish and constitute such regional conference boards as may be required and to elect their administrative officers. 4. To determine the boundaries of the annual conferences within their respective areas. 5. To make such rules and regulations for the administration of the work within their boundaries including such changes and adaptations of the General Discipline as the conditions in the respective areas may require, subject to the powers that have been or shall be vested in the General Conference. 6. To appoint a judicial court to determine legal questions arising on the rules, regulations, and such revised, adapted, or new sections of the regional conference Discipline enacted by the regional conference. 7. To appoint a committee on appeals to hear and determine the appeal of a traveling preacher of that regional conference from the decision of a committee on trial. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

### Proposed Constitutional Amendment – XIV

On May 1, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 629 Yes, 248 No. It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section VI, ¶ 32, *Article I*, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section VI, ¶ 32, *Article I*) amend by deletion and addition, as follows: Delete “central” before “conferences” and add “regional” before “conferences” and add “(The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)” at end of the paragraph. If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 32 (¶ 32) would read: The annual conference shall be composed of clergy members as defined by the General Conference, together with professing lay members elected by each charge, the diaconal ministers, the active deaconesses under Episcopal appointment within the bounds of the annual conference, the conference president of United Methodist Women, the conference president of United Methodist Men, the conference lay leader, district lay leaders, the president or equivalent officer of the conference young adult organization, the president of the conference youth organization, the chair of the annual conference college student organization, and one young person between the ages of twelve (12) and seventeen (17) and one young person between the ages of eighteen (18) and thirty (30) from each district to be selected in such a manner as may be determined by the annual conference. In the annual conferences of the regional conferences, the four-year participation and the two-year membership requirements may be waived by the annual conference for young persons under thirty (30) years of age. Such persons must be professing members of The United Methodist Church and active participants at the time of election. Each charge served by more than one clergy shall be entitled to as many lay members as there are clergy members. The lay members shall have been for the two years next preceding their election members of The United Methodist Church and shall have been active participants in The United Methodist Church for at least four years next preceding their election. If the lay membership should number less than the clergy members of the annual conference, the annual conference shall, by its own formula, provide for the election of additional lay members to equalize lay and clergy membership of the annual conference. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

### AND If both Amendments XIV and XV\*\* are adopted, the resulting paragraph would read:

The annual conference shall be composed of lay and clergy members as defined by the General Conference. Lay members shall have been professing members of The United Methodist Church for one year preceding their election. If the lay membership should number less than the clergy members of the Annual Conference, the Annual Conference shall by its own formula, provide for the election of additional lay members to equalize lay and clergy membership of the Annual Conference.

### Proposed Constitutional Amendment – XVI

On May 1, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 629 Yes, 248 No. It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section VI, ¶ 33, *Article II*, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section VI, ¶ 33, *Article II*) amend by deletion and addition, as follows: Add “, regional” following “General” and before “and” and delete “the” before “jurisdictional” and delete “or “central” before “conferences” in the first sentence. Add “(The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)” at end of the paragraph. If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 33 (¶ 33) would read:

The annual conference is the basic body in the Church and as such shall have reserved to it the right to vote on all constitutional amendments, on the election of clergy and lay delegates to the General, regional and jurisdictional conferences, on all matters relating to the character and conference relations of its clergy members, and on the ordination of clergy and such other rights as have not been delegated to the General Conference under the Constitution, with the exception that the lay members may not vote on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy except that the lay members of the conference board of ordained ministry may vote on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy, with the further exception that lay members of the district committee on ordained ministry be full participating members of the district committee on ordained ministry with vote. It shall discharge such duties and exercise such powers as the General Conference under the Constitution may determine. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

### AND If both Amendments XVI and XVII\*\* are adopted, the resulting paragraph would read:

The annual conference is the basic body in the Church and as such shall have reserved to it the right to vote on all constitutional amendments, on the election of clergy and lay delegates to the General, regional, and jurisdictional conferences, on all matters relating to the character and conference relations of its clergy members, and on the ordination of clergy and such other rights as have not been delegated to the General Conference under the Constitution, with the exception that the lay members may not vote on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy except that the lay members of the conference board of ordained ministry and the committee on investigation may vote on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy, with the further exception that lay members of the district committee on ordained ministry be full participating members of the district committee on ordained ministry with vote. It shall discharge such duties and exercise such powers as the General Conference under the Constitution may determine. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

### Proposed Constitutional Amendment – XVIII

On May 1, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 629 Yes, 248 No. It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section VI, ¶ 34, *Article III*, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section VI, ¶ 34, *Article III*) amend by deletion and addition, as follows: Following “jurisdictional” delete “or “central” and add “and regional”, and add “(The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)” at end of the paragraph. If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 34 (¶ 34) would read: The annual conference shall elect clergy and lay delegates to the General Conference and to its jurisdictional and regional conference

\*\* Amendments XV and XVII are located in Group 5, pages 16-17.



# Group 2 continued

## Proposed Amendments on the Worldwide Nature of the Church Dealing Primarily with the Name Change:

### Proposed Amendment – XVIII Continued

in the manner provided in this section, Articles IV and V. The persons first elected up to the number determined by the ratio for representation in the General Conference shall be representatives in that body. Additional delegates shall be elected to complete the number determined by the ratio for representation in the jurisdictional and regional conference, who, together with those first elected as above, shall be delegates in the jurisdictional and regional conference. The additional delegates to the jurisdictional and regional conference shall in the order of their election be the reserve delegates to the General Conference. The annual conference shall also elect reserve clergy and lay delegates to the jurisdictional and regional conference as it may deem desirable. These reserve clergy and lay delegates to the jurisdictional and regional conferences may act as reserve delegates to the General Conference when it is evident that not enough reserve delegates are in attendance at the General Conference. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

### Proposed Constitutional Amendment – XX

On May 1, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 629 Yes, 248 No. It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section VI, ¶ 35, *Article IV*, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section VI, ¶ 35, *Article IV*) amend by deletion and addition, as follows: Delete “or “central” following “jurisdictional” and add “and regional” following “jurisdictional” and add “(The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)” at end of the paragraph. If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 35 (¶ 35) would read: The ordained ministerial delegates to the General Conference and to the jurisdictional and regional conference shall be elected by and from the ordained ministerial members in full connection with the annual conference or provisional annual conference. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)”

### AND If both Amendments XIX\*\*\* and XX are adopted, the resulting paragraph would read:

The clergy delegates to the General Conference and to the jurisdictional or regional conference shall be elected from the clergy members in full connection and shall be elected by the clergy members of the annual conference who are deacons and elders in full connection, associate members, and those provisional members who have completed all of their educational requirements and local pastors who have completed course of study or an M. Div. degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding the election. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

### Proposed Constitutional Amendment – XXI

On May 1, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 629 Yes, 248 No. It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section VI, ¶ 36, *Article V*, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section VI, ¶ 36, *Article V*) amend by deletion and addition, as follows: Delete “and” before “jurisdictional” and delete “or “central” before “conferences” and add “and regional” before “conferences” in the first clause, delete “or “central” before “conferences” and add “and regional” before conferences in the last clause and add “(The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)” at end of the paragraph. If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 36 (¶ 36) would read:

The lay delegates to the General, jurisdictional and regional conferences shall be elected by the lay members of the annual conference or provisional annual

### Proposed Amendment – XXI Continued

conference without regard to age; provided such delegates shall have been professing members of The United Methodist Church for at least two years next preceding their election, and shall have been active participants in The United Methodist Church for at least four years next preceding their election, and are members thereof within the annual conference electing them at the time of holding the General and jurisdictional and regional conferences. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

### Proposed Constitutional Amendment – XXIV

On May 1, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 629 Yes, 248 No. It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section VII, ¶ 40, *Article IV*, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section VII, ¶ 40, *Article IV*) amend by deletion and addition, as follows: Before “conferences” delete “central” and before “conferences” add “regional” and add “(The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)” at end of the paragraph. If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 40 (¶ 40) would read: Changes in the number, names, and boundaries of the annual conferences and episcopal areas may be effected by the jurisdictional conferences in the United States of America and by the regional conferences outside the United States of America according to the provisions under the respective powers and pursuant to the respective structures of the jurisdictional and the regional conferences. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

### Proposed Constitutional Amendment – XXV

On May 1, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 629 Yes, 248 No. It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division Three, ¶ 46, *Article I*, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division Three, ¶ 46, *Article I*) amend by deletion and addition, as follows: Before “conferences” delete “central” and before “conferences” add “regional” and before “conference” delete “central” and before “conference” add “regional” and add “(The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)” at end of the paragraph. If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 46 (¶ 46) would read: The bishops shall be elected by the respective jurisdictional and regional conferences and consecrated in the historic manner at such time and place as may be fixed by the General Conference for those elected by the jurisdictions and by each regional conference for those elected by such regional conference. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

### Proposed Constitutional Amendment – XXVII

On May 1, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 629 Yes, 246 No. It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division Three, ¶ 49, *Article V*, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division Three, ¶ 49, *Article V*) amend by deletion and addition, as follows: In the first sentence, before “conferences” delete “or “central” and before “conferences” add “and regional” and in the first sentence of the second paragraph delete “central” before “conference” and add “regional” before “conference” and add “(The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)” at end of the paragraph. If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 49 (¶ 49) would read:

The bishops shall have residential and presidential supervision in the jurisdictional and regional conferences in which they are elected or to which they

\*\*\* Amendment XIX is located in Group 4, page 14.



# Group 2 continued

## Proposed Amendments on the Worldwide Nature of the Church Dealing Primarily with the Name Change

### Proposed Amendment – XXVII Continued

are transferred. Bishops may be transferred from one jurisdiction to another jurisdiction for presidential and residential supervision under the following conditions: (1) The transfer of bishops may be on either of two bases: (a) a jurisdiction that receives a bishop by transfer from another jurisdiction may transfer to that jurisdiction or to a third jurisdiction one of its own bishops eligible for transfer, so that the number transferred in by each jurisdiction shall be balanced by the number transferred out; or (b) a jurisdiction may receive a bishop from another jurisdiction and not transfer out a member of its own College of Bishops. (2) No bishop shall be transferred unless that bishop shall have specifically consented. (3) No bishop shall be eligible for transfer unless the bishop shall have served one quadrennium in the jurisdiction that elected the bishop to the episcopacy. (4) All such transfers shall require the approval by a majority vote of the members present and voting of the jurisdictional committees on episcopacy of the jurisdictions that are involved. After the above procedures have been followed, the transferring bishop shall become a member of the receiving College of Bishops and shall be subject to residential assignment by that jurisdictional conference. A bishop may be assigned by the Council of Bishops for presidential service or other temporary service in another jurisdiction than that which elected the bishop; provided that the request is made by a majority of the bishops in the jurisdiction of the proposed service. In the case of an emergency in any jurisdiction or regional conference through the death or disability of a bishop or other cause, the Council of Bishops may assign a bishop from another jurisdiction or regional conference to the work of the said jurisdiction or regional conference, with the consent of a majority of the bishops of that jurisdiction or regional conference. (The change in name from "central" to "regional" takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

### Proposed Constitutional Amendment – XXVIII

On May 1, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 629 Yes, 248 No. It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division Three, ¶ 50, Article VI, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division Three, ¶ 50, Article VI) amend by deletion and addition, as follows: In the third sentence, delete "central" before "conference" and add "regional" before "conference" and add "(The change in name from "central" to "regional" takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)" at end of the paragraph. If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 50 (¶ 50) would read: The bishops, both active and retired, of The Evangelical United Brethren Church and of The Methodist Church at the time union is consummated shall be bishops of The United Methodist Church. The bishops of The Methodist Church elected by the jurisdictions, the active bishops of The Evangelical United Brethren Church at the time of union, and bishops elected by the jurisdictions of The United Methodist Church shall have life tenure. Each bishop elected by a regional conference of The Methodist Church shall have such tenure as the regional conference electing him shall have determined. The jurisdictional conference shall elect a standing committee on episcopacy to consist of one clergy and one lay delegate from each annual conference, on nomination of the annual conference delegation. The committee shall review the work of the bishops, pass on their character and official administration, and report to the jurisdictional conference its findings for such action as the conference may deem appropriate within its constitutional warrant of power. The committee shall recommend the assignments of the bishops to their respective residences for final action by the jurisdictional conference. (The change in name from "central" to "regional" takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

### Proposed Constitutional Amendment – XXIX

On May 1, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 629 Yes, 248 No. It is now presented to the

### Proposed Amendment – XXIX Continued

Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division Three, ¶ 51, Article VII, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division Three, ¶ 51, Article VII) amend by deletion and addition, as follows: Delete "central" before "or jurisdictional" and add "regional" before "or jurisdictional" and add "(The change in name from "central" to "regional" takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)" at end of the paragraph. If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 51 (¶ 51) would read: A bishop presiding over an annual, regional, or jurisdictional conference shall decide all questions of law coming before the bishop in the regular business of a session; provided that such questions be presented in writing and that the decisions be recorded in the journal of the conference. Such an episcopal decision shall not be authoritative except for the pending case until it shall have been passed upon by the Judicial Council. All decisions of law made by each bishop shall be reported in writing annually, with a syllabus of the same, to the Judicial Council, which shall affirm, modify, or reverse them. (The change in name from "central" to "regional" takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

### Proposed Constitutional Amendment – XXX

On May 1, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 629 Yes, 248 No. It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division Three, ¶ 52, Article VIII, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division Three, ¶ 52, Article VIII) amend by deletion and addition, as follows: Delete "central" after "jurisdictional and" and add "regional" after "jurisdictional and" and add "(The change in name from "central" to "regional" takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)" at end of the paragraph. If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 52 (¶ 52) would read: The bishops of the several jurisdictional and regional conferences shall preside in the sessions of their respective conferences. (The change in name from "central" to "regional" takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

### Proposed Constitutional Amendment – XXXI

On May 1, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 629 Yes, 248 No. It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division Four, ¶ 56, Article II, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division Four, ¶ 56, Article II) amend by deletion and addition, as follows: Delete "central" after "jurisdictional or" and add "regional" after "jurisdictional or" and delete "central" after "jurisdictional or a" and add "regional" after "jurisdictional or a" and add "(The change in name from "central" to "regional" takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)" at end of the paragraph. If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 56 (¶ 56) would read: The Judicial Council shall have authority: 1. To determine the constitutionality of any act of the General Conference upon an appeal of a majority of the Council of Bishops or one-fifth of the members of the General Conference and to determine the constitutionality of any act of a jurisdictional or regional conference upon an appeal of a majority of the bishops of that jurisdictional or regional conference or upon the appeal of one-fifth of the members of that jurisdictional or regional conference. 2. To hear and determine any appeal from a bishop's decision on a question of law made in the annual conference when said appeal has been made by one-fifth of that conference present and voting. 3. To pass upon decisions of law made by bishops in annual conferences. 4. To hear and determine the legality of any action taken therein by any General Conference board or jurisdictional or regional conference board or body, upon appeal by one-third of the members thereof, or upon request of the Council of Bishops



## Group 2 continued

### Proposed Amendments on the Worldwide Nature of the Church Dealing Primarily with the Name Change

#### Proposed Amendment – XXXI Continued

or a majority of the bishops of a jurisdictional or a regional conference. 5. To have such other duties and powers as may be conferred upon it by the General Conference. 6. To provide its own methods of organization and procedure. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

#### Proposed Constitutional Amendment – XXXII

On May 1, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 629 Yes, 248 No. It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division Five, ¶ 61, *Article II*, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division Five, ¶ 61, *Article II*) amend by deletion and addition, as follows: Delete “central” after “jurisdictional or” and add “regional” after “jurisdictional or” and add “(The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)” at end of the paragraph. If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 61 (¶ 61) would read: A jurisdictional or regional conference may by a majority vote propose changes in the Constitution of the Church, and such proposed changes shall be submitted to the next General Conference. If the General Conference adopts the measure by a two-thirds vote, it shall be submitted to the annual conferences according to the provision for amendments. (The change in name from “central” to “regional” takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

#### Rationale For and Against Group 2 Amendments

The following proposed Constitutional amendments would change nomenclature for areas outside the United States of America from “central” conferences to “regional” conferences:

##### Rationale FOR

- The same rationale discussed in support of Amendments IV, X, XIII, XXVI are applicable to these amendments.
- These constitutional amendments changing the nomenclature from “central” to “regional” conferences” are important in disassociating ourselves from past racist structures in Methodism. From the formation of The Methodist Church in 1939 until the formation of The United Methodist Church in 1968, the church perpetuated and institutionalized patterns of racism through the racially segregated “central conference” structure in the United States. Changing the nomenclature for the current “central conferences” outside the United States to “regional conferences” will further distance us from a racist past and affirm our desire to set aside racial barriers.

##### Rationale AGAINST

- The same rationale discussed in opposition to Amendments IV, X, XIII, XXVI are applicable to these amendments.
- These amendments are a part of a “package” of proposed constitutional changes which are premature and flawed. While these amendments do not create any structural changes, the entire “package” should be set aside until a clearer plan of re-structuring is agreed upon.

## Group 3

### A single amendment proposing a change in the language defining the availability of the ministry of the church to all persons: Amendment I

#### Proposed Constitutional Amendment – I

On May 1, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 558 Yes, 276 No. It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division One, ¶ 4, *Article IV*, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division One, ¶ 4, *Article IV*) amend by deletion and addition as follows: After “worth” add “and that we are in ministry to all” and after “persons” delete “without regard to race, color, national origin, status or economic condition” and after “sacraments,” add “and” and after “members” delete “,” and insert a period and add “All persons,” and after “faith” add “and relationship in Jesus Christ, shall be eligible to” and after “body” delete “of the Church because of race, color, national origin, status or economic condition”. If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 4 (¶ 4) would read: Inclusiveness of the Church — The United Methodist Church is a part of the church universal, which is one Body in Christ. The United Methodist Church acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth and that we are in ministry to all. All persons shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, and upon baptism be admitted as baptized members. All persons, upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith and relationship in Jesus Christ, shall be eligible to become professing members in any local church in the connection. In the United Methodist Church no conference or other organizational unit of the Church shall be structured so as to exclude any member or any constituent body.

#### Rationale For and Against Group 3 Amendment

Proposed constitutional amendment I emphasizes the wideness of God’s mercy and the availability of the ministry of the church to all. Amendment I revises language in Division One, ¶ 4, *Article IV* specifying that The United Methodist Church is in ministry to all. Additionally, more detailed language about “race, color, national origin, status, or economic condition” is replaced with “all persons.”

##### Rationale FOR

- The United Methodist Church is committed to inclusiveness and to being in ministry to and with all persons. This amendment strengthens our commitment by placing clearer and broader language in the constitutional article which most directly deals with the Inclusiveness of the Church.
- The proposed amendment replaces cumbersome lists identifying race, color, national origin, status, or economic condition with succinct and direct language.
- This amendment clarifies that no member of any constituent body can be barred from membership in The United Methodist Church so long as that person is prepared to take vows declaring the Christian faith and relationship with Jesus Christ.
- The *Discipline* of the United Methodist Church has been used to exclude



# Group 3 continued

## Proposing a change in the language defining the availability of the ministry of the church to all persons

### Group 3, Amendment I - Rationale For and Against - continued

#### Rationale FOR Continued

persons who are gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, and transgendered from membership in the church. In the past, The Discipline of the United Methodist Church has also been used to exclude women and people of color from full and equal participation in the life of the church. This amendment clarifies that all are welcome as members.

- The Discipline of the United Methodist Church is silent on the issue of pastors' determining readiness. That was dropped from The Discipline when pastors were using it to bar membership in the church on the basis of skin color. Inclusiveness is a part of our Wesleyan heritage and United Methodist ethos. We extend the love and grace of Jesus Christ to all.

#### Rationale AGAINST

- The proposed amendment could be used as a foundation by the Judicial Council to overturn current UM Disciplinary positions related to homosexual practice.
- The language of "all" is so broad and undefined that it could have unintended consequences while negating the pastor's or congregation's ability to

#### Rationale AGAINST Continued

exercise appropriate discernment in matters of membership.

- The proposed amendment leaves the decision about readiness for membership solely with the person seeking membership in the church. This is inconsistent with the practice and tradition in Methodism in which the pastor had a role to play in determining readiness for membership.
- The passage of the proposed amendment could provide a constitutional foundation for the Judicial Council to reinterpret their decision 1032. The rationale includes "The appointed pastor in charge has the duty and responsibility to exercise responsible pastoral judgment in determining who may be received into the membership of a local church."
- Judicial Council Decision 1032 supported the decision of a Virginia pastor who refused membership to a man, who is a self-avowed, practicing homosexual. While some believe that this amendment is an appropriate remedy, others believe the broad implications of this for the meaning of membership, pastoral authority and the responsibility of local church leaders make it ill advised.

# Group 4

## A single amendment related to who is able to vote for delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences: Amendment XIX

### Proposed Constitutional Amendment – XIX\*\*\*\*

On May 1, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 696 Yes, 135 No. It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section VI, ¶ 35, Article IV, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section VI, ¶ 35, Article IV) amend by deletion and addition, as follows: Before "clergy" delete "ordained ministerial" and before "from" delete "by and" and before "members" delete "ordained ministerial" and before "members" add "clergy" and before "the annual" delete "with" and before "the annual" add "of" and after "the annual conference" add "who are deacons and elders in full connection, associate members, and those provisional members who have completed all of their educational requirements and local pastors who have completed course of study or an M. Div. degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding the election." If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 35 (¶ 35) would read: The clergy delegates to the General Conference and to the jurisdictional or central conference shall be elected from the clergy members in full connection and shall be elected by the clergy members of the annual conference who are deacons and elders in full connection, associate members, and those provisional members who have completed all of their educational requirements and local pastors who have completed course of study or an M. Div. degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding the election.

### Rationale For and Against Group 4 Amendment

This Amendment would expand the ability to vote for General and Jurisdictional Conference delegates to "...associate members, and those provisional members who have completed all of their educational requirements and local pastors who have completed the Course of Study or an M. Div. degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding the election."

#### Rationale FOR

- To offer justice and equality to associate members, local pastors and provisional members who serve faithfully as pastors in our local congregations – many of whom serve smaller membership churches that are located in both urban and town and country settings serving marginalized populations.

#### Rationale FOR Continued

- To enable these persons to have their voices and perspectives heard through the elected delegates at General and Jurisdictional Conferences.
- Voting rights should be linked with conference membership not ordination which parallels language ¶36 concerning laity.
- The two years under appointment allows the pastor to gain an appreciation of the annual conference as a clergy member within the United Methodist Church.
- This proposed amendment would not affect:
  - Voting on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations,
  - Clergy delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conference must be Full Members,
  - Appointment as District Superintendent and election as Bishop are reserved to ordained elders.
- There is continued growth in the number of Local Pastors and Associate Members in the US:
  - 1988 — 4,983 Local Pastors 1,672 Associate members Total 6,655
  - 2008 — 7,258 Local Pastors 2,037 Associate Members Total 9,295
- The United Methodist Rural Fellowship estimates that approximately 6,807 additional persons would be granted the right to vote on representation for General and Jurisdictional Conferences.

#### Rational AGAINST

- Full Members of the annual conference have training in UM polity, history, and doctrine as well as several years of experience in leadership within those areas in the annual conference.
- Local churches are represented by laity, not by clergy. Clergy are elected to represent the annual conference and therefore should be full members of the annual conference.
- Clergy delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conference have traditionally been elected by and from those who are "Full Members" of the annual conference.
- Full Members of the annual conference typically have greater knowledge of and appreciation for the annual conference.
- This constitutional amendment further separates us from the historic

\*\*\*\* See page 11: "If both Amendments XIX and XX are adopted"



# Group 4 continued

*Related to who is able to vote for delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences*

## Group 4, Amendment XIX - Rationale For and Against - continued

### Rationale AGAINST Continued

- ecumenical connection with the Anglican Church and others: a connection which John Wesley valued and sought to maintain as he began to order the life of the Methodist Church in America.
- As the rules currently stand, only ordained clergy can vote for ordained Elders and Deacons to be clergy delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences. This amendment will give the right to vote for ordained Elder and Deacon Delegates to persons who
  - Have not been ordained (Local Pastors are examined and approved)
  - Have not been examined by the Conference Board of Ordained

Ministry (Local Pastors are examined by the District Committees on Ordained Ministries)

- Have answered some, but not all of the historical questions asked of those who are ordained including:
  - ✓ Whether they believe our doctrines are in harmony with Scripture and if they will teach and maintain them.
  - ✓ Whether they approve of our Church government and polity and if they will support and maintain them.

# Group 5

*Group 5 contains eight amendments which are related but may not require extensive dialog: Amendments II, VI, VIII, IX, XV, XVII, XXII*

## Proposed Constitutional Amendment – II

On May 1, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 744 Yes, 86 No. It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division One, following ¶ 5, Article V, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division One, following ¶ 5, Article V)) amend by addition as follows:

Add a new paragraph "All official organizations, groups, committees, councils, boards, and agencies of The United Methodist Church shall adopt ethics and conflict of interest policies, applicable to both members and employees, which embody and live out our Christian values." If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, the new paragraph would read: All official organizations, groups, committees, councils, boards, and agencies of The United Methodist Church shall adopt ethics and conflict of interest policies, applicable to both members and employees, which embody and live out our Christian values.

### Rationale For and Against Amendment II

The proposed amendment requires the adoption of ethics and conflict of interest policies to ensure accountability and fiduciary integrity.

#### Rationale FOR

None

#### Rationale AGAINST

- The mandatory language in the Constitution is too broad. It would require every group in each local United Methodist Church to impose ethics and conflict of interest policies.
  - a. Groups would include, but not be limited to UMW, UMM, UMYF, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, all "groups" in ministry at a local UMC.
  - b. Not every "group" needs an ethics and conflict of interest policy
  - c. Mandatory language is unnecessary and encourages disregard for that portion of the Discipline which also affects the rest of the Discipline
- Legislation is already being drafted for the 2012 General Conference by Conference Chancellors to place appropriate ethics and conflict of interest policy requirement in the *Book of Discipline*

## Proposed Constitutional Amendment – VI

On May 1, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 690 Yes, 165 No. It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section II, ¶ 15, Article III, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section IV, ¶ 15, Article III) amend by addition, as follows: Add at the end of the paragraph, "Any other provision of the Constitution notwithstanding, General Conference may provide for a transitional period for newly created annual, missionary, or provisional annual conferences, not to exceed two quadrennia, during which time such a conference may be represented at General, jurisdictional,

## Proposed Amendment – VI Continued

and regional conferences on other than a proportional basis. (The change in name from "central" to "regional" takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)" If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 15 (¶ 15) would read: The General Conference shall fix the ratio of representation in the General, jurisdictional, and central conferences from the annual conferences, missionary conferences, and the provisional annual conferences, computed on a two-factor basis: (1) the number of clergy members of the annual conference and the missionary conference, and (2) the number of professing members in the annual conference and the missionary conference; provided that each annual conference, missionary conference, or provisional annual conference shall be entitled to at least one clergy and one lay delegate in the General Conference and also in the jurisdictional or central conference. Any other provision of the Constitution notwithstanding, General Conference may provide for a transitional period for newly created annual, missionary, or provisional annual conferences, not to exceed two quadrennia, during which time such a conference may be represented at General, jurisdictional, and regional conferences on other than a proportional basis. (The change in name from "central" to "regional" takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

### Rationale For and Against Amendment VI

This amendment provides an avenue for General Conference to establish representation for newly created conferences on a non-proportional basis under certain circumstances for a transitional time period.

#### Rationale FOR

- The Methodist Church of Côte d'Ivoire applied for and was granted membership in the United Methodist Church at the 2004 General Conference with the provision for less representation at General Conference 2008 than their membership would require. An ensuing Judicial Council decision determined that the limited representation would stand despite no provision for "transitional" status in the Constitution. This amendment rectifies this circumstance.
- A transitional status allows General Conference to receive new bodies into the UMC while permitting time to determine accurate membership data.

#### Rationale AGAINST

- This amendment deprives new conferences and bodies joining The United Methodist Church of equal representation and creates a two-class system of representation at General Conference.
- The permissive language of the amendment ("may") opens the door to unequal and potentially prejudicial treatment of conferences and bodies

See "Group 5, Amendment VI" page 16



# Group 5 continued

**Eight amendments which are related but may not require extensive dialog**

## Group 5, Amendment VI - Rationale For and Against - continued

seeking affiliation with The United Methodist Church.

- Many believe that the 2004 General Conference action to admit the Côte d'Ivoire Annual Conference was illegal, because The Discipline does not provide for a transitional period. If that is so, then The Judicial Council inappropriately affirmed that illegal action. Retroactively amending the constitution to correct previous errors is not good policy.

### AND If both Amendments V<sup>+</sup> and VI are adopted, the resulting paragraph would read:

The General Conference shall fix the ratio of representation in the General, regional and jurisdictional conferences from the annual conferences, missionary conferences, and the provisional annual conferences, computed on a two-factor basis: (1) the number of clergy members of the annual conference and the missionary conference, and (2) the number of professing members in the annual conference, and the missionary conference, provided that each annual conference, missionary conference, or provisional annual conference shall be entitled to at least one clergy and one lay delegate in the General Conference and also in the jurisdictional or regional conference. Any other provision of the Constitution notwithstanding, General Conference may provide for a transitional period for newly created annual, missionary, or provisional annual conferences, not to exceed two quadrennia, during which time such a conference may be represented at General, jurisdictional, and regional conferences on other than a proportional basis. (The change in name from "central" to "regional" takes effect January 1, 2013 at which time this parenthetical procedural note will be removed from the Constitution.)

## Proposed Constitutional Amendment – VIII

On April 29, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 804 Yes, 39 No. It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section II, ¶ 16, *Article IV*, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section II, ¶ 16, *Article IV*) amend by deletion and addition, as follows: In ¶ 16.1 and .14 add ", gender" after "race". If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 16.1 and .14 (¶ 16.1 and .14) would read: 1. To define and fix the conditions, privileges, and duties of Church membership, which shall in every case be without reference to race, gender or status. 14. To secure the rights and privileges of membership in all agencies, programs, and institutions in The United Methodist Church regardless of race, gender or status.

### Rationale For and Against Amendment VIII

The amendment recommends adding gender to the categories of persons protected against discriminatory treatment in the denominations global foundations document.

#### Rationale FOR

- Given our long-standing work in eliminating gender bias and sexual misconduct in the Church, it is glaring that gender is not included in the duties of the General Conference. This amendment will provide this inclusiveness.
- For the Church to model the community of Jesus Christ, our ministries must not be based on the norms of our cultures regarding gender, but based on love lived in action, following the mandate of Christ.

#### Rationale AGAINST

None

## Proposed Constitutional Amendment – IX

On April 29, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 821 Yes, 50 No. It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section IV, ¶ 23, *Article I*, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section IV, ¶ 23, *Article I*) amend by addition, as follows: Add ", provided that no jurisdictional conference shall have fewer than 100 delegates" before the period at the end of the first sentence. If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 23 (¶ 23) would read: The jurisdictional conferences shall be composed of as many representatives from the annual conferences and missionary conferences as shall be determined by a uniform basis established by the General Conference, provided that no jurisdictional conference shall have fewer than 100 delegates. The missionary conferences shall be considered as annual conferences for the purpose of this article.

### Rationale For and Against Amendment IX

This amendment will ensure a minimum basis of support for the election of bishops at Jurisdictional Conferences.

#### Rationale FOR

All Jurisdictional Conferences shall have the same status and the same privileges of action within the limits fixed by the Constitution. Since Bishops are elected at Jurisdictional Conferences, it is important to ensure some minimum basis of support for election. This will establish a minimum number of delegates to Jurisdictional Conference.

#### Rationale AGAINST

None

## Proposed Constitutional Amendment – XV<sup>++</sup>

On May 1, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 718 Yes, 117 No. It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section VI, ¶ 32, *Article I*, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section VI, ¶ 32, *Article I*) amend by deletion and addition, as follows: Delete everything in the first paragraph following "shall be composed of" and add "professing lay and clergy members as defined by the General Conference. Lay members shall have been members of The United Methodist Church for one year preceding their election." If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 32 (¶ 32) would read: The annual conference shall be composed of lay and clergy members as defined by the General Conference. Lay members shall have been professing members of The United Methodist Church for one year preceding their election. If the lay membership should number less than the clergy members of the Annual Conference, the Annual Conference shall by its own formula, provide for the election of additional lay members to equalize lay and clergy membership of the Annual Conference.

### Rationale For and Against Amendment XV

Proposed Constitutional Amendment XV allows the General Conference to define laity and clergy membership of the annual conference without going through the complicated process of changing the constitution.

#### Rationale FOR

- The proposed amendment simplifies the process by allowing the definition of laity and clergy of the annual conference to be defined by the General Conference without going through the process of changing the constitution.
- This portion of The *Book of Discipline* of The United Methodist Church, Section VI, Article 1 of the Constitution, has been amended 16 times since 1968.

+ Amendment V is located in Group 2, page 9.

++ See page 10: "If both Amendments XIV and XV are adopted"



# Group 5 continued

*Eight amendments which are related but may not require extensive dialog*

## Group 5, Amendment XV - Rationale For and Against - continued

### Rationale AGAINST

The constitution is the logical place to define the clergy members of the annual conference. Changing the definition should be a very intentional decision, with deliberation and agreement by the annual conferences through the process of changing the constitution.

### Proposed Constitutional Amendment – XVII+++

On May 1, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 812 Yes, 49 No. It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section VI, ¶ 33, *Article II*, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section VI, ¶ 33, *Article II*) amend by addition, as follows: Add “and the committee on investigation” following “ministry.” If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 33 (¶ 33) would read: The annual conference is the basic body in the Church and as such shall have reserved to it the right to vote on all constitutional amendments, on the election of clergy and lay delegates to the General and the jurisdictional or central conferences, on all matters relating to the character and conference relations of its clergy members, and on the ordination of clergy and such other rights as have not been delegated to the General Conference under the Constitution, with the exception that the lay members may not vote on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy except that the lay members of the conference board of ordained ministry and the committee on investigation may vote on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy, with the further exception that lay members of the district committee on ordained ministry be full participating members of the district committee on ordained ministry with vote. It shall discharge such duties and exercise such powers as the General Conference under the Constitution may determine.

## Rationale For and Against Amendment XVII

Proposed Constitutional Amendment XVII supports reinstatement of legislation adopted by the 2004 General Conference (and subsequently declared unconstitutional by the Judicial Council) to allow lay persons on the Conference Committee on Investigation to vote on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.

### Rationale FOR

- The United Methodist Church has been intentional in approving legislation allowing participation of laity on Conference Boards of Ordained Ministry and District Committees on Ordained Ministry with voice and vote. As such, lay members of the Conference Boards of Ministry and District Boards of Ministry are invited to attend the Clergy Session of Annual Conference and may vote on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.
- Lay members of Annual Conference Committees on Investigation have both voice and vote which means they have already “investigated” charges that have been brought about clergy and have participated in the committee vote concerning matters of ordination, character and conference relations and have been a part of careful discernment regarding those decisions and the implications of such.
- If this amendment is affirmed, provision would need to be made to invite lay members of the Conference Committee of Investigation to participate in the Clergy Session at Annual Conference with voice and vote.

### Rationale AGAINST

- It is the belief of many that the traditional relationship between laity and clergy in which laity cannot vote on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy should remain.
- There is currently no provision for lay members of the Committee on Investigation to attend the Clergy Session of Annual Conference.

+++ See page 10: “If both Amendments XVI and XVII are adopted”

## Proposed Constitutional Amendment – XXII

On April 29, 2008, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Fort Worth, Texas, the following Constitutional Amendment was made by a recorded vote of 757 Yes, 27 No. It is now presented to the Annual Conferences for vote. In the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section VII, ¶ 37, *Article I*, (2008 *Book of Discipline*, Division Two, Section VII, ¶ 37, *Article I*) amend by addition, as follows: Before “Connecticut” add “Bermuda”. If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 37 (¶ 37) would read: The United Methodist Church shall have jurisdictional conferences made up as follows: Northeastern-Bermuda, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, the Virgin Islands, West Virginia. Southeastern-Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia. North Central-Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin. South Central-Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas. Western-Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming and the territory of the United States in the Pacific region.

## Rationale For and Against Amendment XXII

Proposed Constitutional Amendment XXII allows “Bermuda” to be added before “Connecticut” in the listing of the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference.

### Rationale FOR

- The proposed amendment formally recognizes that the Baltimore-Washington Conference has been appointing pastors, superintending the congregations, and integrating the congregations of Bermuda into the life of the Baltimore-Washington Conference.
- The General Board of Global Ministries and the Baltimore-Washington Conference recognize these churches as United Methodist congregations.
- The proposed amendment would make official what is already being done in practice.

### Rationale AGAINST

- It seems a bit odd to include Bermuda as a part of the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference because of the geography. However, this is already what is being done in practice.

## Church’s worldwide nature to be studied by new committee

(UMNS) Twenty United Methodists from across the globe have been named to a committee to develop recommendations related to the worldwide nature of The United Methodist Church.

The committee members, named by Bishop Gregory Palmer, president of the Council of Bishops and Bishop John Hopkins, chairperson of the Connectional Table, will study the denomination’s changing worldwide demographics as well as its structural needs and take recommendations to the 2012 General Conference, the denomination’s top legislative body.

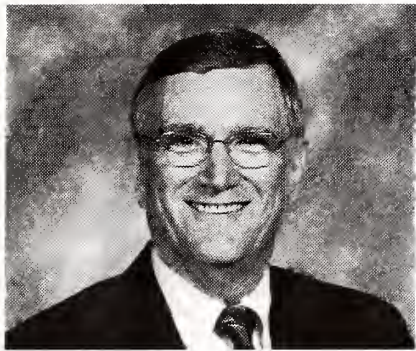
Last May, the 2008 General Conference made a cautious step toward reorganizing the 11.5 million-member United Methodist Church so it does not appear to be a U.S. church with satellite locations in Africa, Asia and Europe.

Delegates voted to consider recommendations proposed by a study group that submitted 23 petitions to amend the church’s constitution to allow for the creation of a regional conference for the United States. The recommendations include the possibility of making the United States a “central conference” similar to other conferences elsewhere in the world.

The 2008 delegates requested that the Council of Bishops and the Connectional Table create a 20-member committee to consider the study group’s recommendations, and they suggested that the six mem-

See “Worldwide nature,” page 20





By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

# June <sup>adult</sup> BIBLE STUDY

Based on the scripture lessons of Cokesbury's Adult Bible Studies series.

## June 7, 2009

**Text: Exodus 3:1-12**  
**"God Calls Moses"**

Do you notice how in the familiar story of the burning bush, God messes up a perfectly good plan for rescuing the Hebrew people from Egypt?

You've got to like the way it begins: God's sending an angel to appear to Moses (Exodus 3:2); God's remembering all God has done for the Hebrew people (Exodus 3:6); God's affirmation that the cry of the Israelites in Egypt has been heard (Exodus 3:7); God's promise to deliver the Hebrew children into a new land, a land flowing with milk and honey (Exodus 3:8). God clearly has a plan and it is going to benefit the Israelites. Hooray!

But, then, boom! God reveals the plan, and my excitement begins to go downhill. (And Moses' excitement begins to go downhill—Exodus 3:11.) Just when I thought God was going to take care of matters, God says, "Oh, by the way, I am counting on you to do the heavy lifting" (as the spiritual says, "Go tell ol' Pharaoh, let my people go"). Why can't God handle this on God's own doing?

What I recognize in this text is the truth that God's call of Moses (or of Belton, or of Linda, or of Donald, or of José) comes packaged with what God wants us to do!

When clergy get together, they sometimes share the stories of how they were called into ministry. That is good. But why do not lay persons speak of how they were called into ministry? Your baptism is God's call and claim upon your life. If the burning bush was not burned up, let us also claim that the waters of baptism do not evaporate. Baptism is holy ground (Exodus 3:5) because God uses that sacred relationship to call us—each of us—to go to some Egypt

and deliver the children of God.

A teacher might go to the Egypt of ignorance. A caregiver might go to the Egypt of family illness. A parent might be in the Egypt of a dysfunctional family. A worker might go to the Egypt of broken spirits. A retiree might go to the Egypt of forgotten heritage. A builder might go to the Egypt of seeing others do shoddy work.

And Moses said, "Here I am" (Exodus 3:4). It's a beginning.

### What Someone Else Has Said:

Hans Walter Wolff (*Anthropology of the Old Testament*, Fortress) wrote about the framework of God's call: "Thus every story of election is first the story of a setting apart, just as every call and revelation first of all takes its recipient into loneliness."

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Here I am, Lord..."

## June 14, 2009

**Text: Exodus 4:10-16, 27-31**  
**"Moses and Aaron Respond"**

Have you ever tried to follow the directions of a GPS system when it seems to want to send you around your elbow to get to your face? Turn left. Turn right. Go 1.4 miles and turn right. If I know where I am, instead of heeding the electronic GPS, I might find it simpler just to turn at the Newton's front yard!

Stick with me now. This is going to be a bit like a complicated instruction from your Garmin or your Tom Tom GPS! First, let's go to Ephesians 4. (In my Bible, that is 1,033 pages from the text for this lesson!) Note that the writer of Ephesians says that God does not give the same gifts to each person: *some* apostles, *some* prophets, *some* evangelists, *some* teachers, *some* pastors (Ephesians 4:11). Not everyone, but *some*!

Now move back to this week's text. Moses has argued with God (talk about feeling comfortable in the presence of God!) that Aaron is better equipped to do what God wants done

than is Moses (Exodus 4:13). God agrees! (Exodus 4:14). God does not expect any one of us to have all the gifts needed for the upbuilding of God's people, for the accomplishment of all of God's purposes.

This must be one of the great freeing-up passages in the Bible! What a relief to discover that I don't have to have every gift God dispenses in order to be of help to God! Do you feel guilty that you do not have the gift of justice? Find a prophet who will speak a word from the Lord. Do you feel guilty that you do not have the gift of prayer? Find a prayer warrior who can take you to the throne of grace.. Do you feel guilty that you do not have the gift of easy speech? Find someone who speaks clearly and offer the gift of listening. Do you feel guilty that you are not a highly polished musician? Find someone who "makes a joyful noise" and celebrate their gift.

Now the tricky part of this is that I may be tempted to deny a gift I actually do have in order to escape the responsibility of using that gift. That is why we need each other. Moses and Aaron together are able to hear God's will and to find a way to deliver the message to the people of Israel. We need one another in the community of faith, both for having access to gifts we do not have and for having someone who will challenge us to the full use of the gifts we do have..

### What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Charles Wesley: Life, Literature, and Legacy* (eds., Kenneth Newport and Ted Campbell, Epworth Press), Paul Chilcote wrote, "Not only is the prayer of faith a personal discipline; it is a corporate action. Faith requires community."

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Show us how, together..."

## June 21, 2009

**Text: Exodus 5:1-9, 22-6:1**  
**"Pharaoh Ignores God's Call"**

Following the will of God is not so hard to do as long as things are going well. But sometimes life pushes back

and we are left wondering "How did I get into this mess?"

In this study text, Moses and Aaron have confronted Pharaoh with what they understand to be the call of God: "Send us out! Let us go!" (Exodus 5:1) So far, so good. But then Pharaoh says, in effect, (Exodus 5:4) "I don't think so!" In fact, Pharaoh says he will make things worse for the Hebrews who have been so audacious as to ask to leave! (Exodus 5:7)

Now it gets tough. What do you do when you think you have done the right thing, but the results suggest that you might have blown it? In our results-driven society, there is not much place for those who don't "get it done." Think back to the March Madness NCAA Basketball Tournament a few months ago. Can you name the teams that made it to the Elite Eight, or even the Final Four? We probably know who won but we don't have much memory for those who didn't win.

So, Aaron and Moses find themselves in a dilemma that sounds very much like today. They do the right thing but do not get results. Is it sufficient to do the right thing if there are no results? Indeed, if there are no results, can we really have done the right thing?

Moses raises exactly that issue: "Why did you ever send me?" (Exodus 5:22) Have you ever felt that way? Have you ever felt "Why bother?"

Just as Moses comes to that moment of despair (Exodus 5:22-23), God speaks up and says, "You ain't seen nothing yet!" (Hmmm. Does God speak in poor English?) God says to Moses, "You've done what you are supposed to do; I'll take care of the rest" (Exodus 6:1). It is a reminder that God calls us to faithfulness and not necessarily to obvious success. (Now that does not mean that you have done God's will just because you are a failure, but at least it puts success and failure into perspective!) Step one is God's initiative in calling us. Step two is our response. God is responsible for step three.

### What Someone Else Has Said:

In Michael Malone's novel *Foolscap* (Sourcebooks Landmark) Rhodora, a rather strangely mixed character, says, "Nobody can be that mad at God without a whole lot of faith."

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your

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## It's not too late to support Native American Ministries Sunday

Sunday, April 26 was designated as Native American Ministries Sunday for congregations in The United Methodist Church. However, churches are invited to recognize and support the contributions of Native Americans to the church and society throughout the year.

This recognition impacts several churches of the North Carolina Conference. This conference has about 2,500 Native Americans worshipping weekly - the highest number of Native Americans in the Southeastern Jurisdiction.

Offerings given to Native American Ministries support local and national programs. Fifty percent of NCC offerings stay in the conference

to strengthen ministries in this area. The remaining 50 percent expands mission work with the Native American Urban Initiative and provides scholarships for Native Americans attending United Methodist and other approved schools of theology.

Learn more about Native American Ministries within the conference at [www.nativeamericanministries.org](http://www.nativeamericanministries.org). For questions or to arrange a presentation, contact Gary Locklear, a Church and Community Worker based in Pembroke, at 910 522-0670.

Online donations to the Special Sunday offering may be made through [www.umcgiving.org](http://www.umcgiving.org) and selecting Special Sundays / Native American Ministries Sunday.



(Left) Dr. Lawrence Johnson, conference director of multicultural ministries, talks with members of the congregation at one of the worship services celebrating 140 years of ministry at Beauty Spot. Dr. Jimmy Cummings (right) greets other worshippers.

## June Bible study from page 18

prayer begin: "God of all ages, who with power and purpose called your servant Moses, help us to hear your call to us. When we stand before the pharaohs of our journey, remind us that we do not stand alone, and keep our hearts facing the tomorrows of your triumph..."

### June 28, 2009

**Text: Exodus 14:15-25, 30**

**"God Calls the People Out of Egypt"**

In *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, there is this story: "One day some of the brethren came to see Abba Antony, and among them was Abba Joseph. Wishing to test them, the old man mentioned a text from Scripture, and starting with the youngest he asked them what it meant. Each explained it as best he could. But to each one the old man replied, 'You have not yet found the answer.' Last of all, he said to Abba Joseph, 'And what do you think the text means?' He replied, 'I do not know.' Then Abba Antony said, 'Truly, Abba Joseph has found the way, for he said, "I do not know."'"

There is a lot in this week's text (and its predecessor verses) to which I must say, "I do not know."

Does God really make the hearts of some people harden against God? (Exodus 14:17)

Why is there dry ground for the Israelites and mud for the Egyptians? (Exodus 14:16, 25)

Why is it all right for God to kill the Egyptians when one of the commandments says not to kill? (Exodus 14:30)

Why did God slay the Egyptians just when they were becoming believers in Yahweh? (Exodus 14:25)

Why did God kill Egyptian soldiers who probably had no bone to pick with

the Hebrews, but were only following orders? (Exodus 14:30)

How do Egyptian Christians today feel when they read these texts about their ancestors?

This week's lesson is a good reminder that the Bible is a compass, not a road map. The scriptural accounts point us in a direction without revealing all the nuances of details and without resolving all mystery. Saint Augustine once said, "If we understand it, it is not God." Bingo! Mystery! The word "mystery" is from a Greek word that means "closed of eyes or lips." Look at 1 Corinthians 2:9-10. Those verses explain why there is no explaining.

#### What Someone Else Has Said:

H. L. Ellison (*Exodus*, Westminster Press) wrote, "The day is summed up in the simple phrase, 'Thus the Lord saved Israel.' (Jewish tradition) has shown understanding of this fact by omitting the name of Moses...from the *Haggadah*, the traditional liturgy of the Jewish Passover."

#### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of salvation, freedom..."

## 2009 marks 140 years of mission and ministry at Beauty Spot UMC

Beauty Spot UMC in Robeson County is celebrating 140 years of mission and ministry as a congregation in the Purvis community.

A group began meeting and planning for a Beauty Spot church in the late 1860's and their dreams and goals became a reality in 1869 when the Beauty Spot Methodist Episcopal Church was established.

One way today's congregation is celebrating 140 years of ministry and mission is by a newly adopted quadrennial Ministry Action Plan with the theme: "Come Home to Beauty Spot: to a Spring of Living Water Gushing Forth from the Fountain of the Holy Spirit."

The 2009 emphasis is Faith and Family; 2010, Faith and Fellowship; 2011, Faith and Finance; and 2012, Faith and Future.

Through these emphases the church will reach out to the whole community. The congregation is also celebrating 140 years by having a series of guest preachers deliver the worship sermon.

Dr. Lawrence Johnson, NC Con-

ference director of multicultural ministries preached on March 29 when the church recognized new members.

Other visiting preachers will include retired pastors the Rev. LeRoy Worth (May 31) and Dr. James W. Ferree (Aug. 30).

Dr. John A. Campbell and the Rev. Robert A. Fairley are expected to preach during the fall revival services.

Dr. Joseph Mann, director, Rural Church Division, Duke Endowment, has been invited to be the homecoming preacher on Sept. 20.

The Rev. Leonard E. Fairley, Rockingham District superintendent, who entered the ministry through Beauty Spot UMC, is expected to preach on Nov. 29 when the congregation anticipates consecrating its new education and fellowship activities building.

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## Bishops address concerns - A Commentary continued from page 5

at the table, this is the last generation that will seriously engage our present system. Some will acquiesce, some will drop out and some will belligerently revolt. The same is true of clergy when their family concerns cannot be accommodated by the itineracy.

I believe that our episcopal system of appointments could become more like that of the Episcopal and Lutheran churches, with the role of the D.S. more like a broker. Appointments could be made all year long, not in one cathartic yet frenetic turn-over season.

Feedback on this commentary may be given through the NC Conference website <http://nccumc.org>

The Reform movements from 1792-1843 would make good required reading for our

Council of Bishops and Division of Ordained Ministry! The authoritarianism of Wesley and Asbury was maintained at horrific cost to democracy and the priesthood of all believers.

The bishops were also concerned about the quality of United Methodist clergy. Bishop Gwinn summed it up: "Our pool of effective, passionate clergy is too shallow."

He described a meeting with laity from a local church who had documented their pastor's sustained inef-

fectiveness. One young man said to him, with tears running down his face, "Bishop, I will get on my knees here before my colleagues and Almighty God and beg you to send us the right pastor before our church dies."

Bishops agreed what keeps them awake at night, most of all, is the necessity of "pulling" a pastor because of moral turpitude, ineffective work or lack of conflict-management skills.

So what are examples of local churches where missional ministry is making a difference? Bishop Gwinn cited Solid Rock, Sandy Plains and Cedar Grove as rural churches who are leading out in eastern NC.

Bishop Huie cited the response of Houston pastors to Hurricane Ike. "It

is a beautiful thing to see an effective pastor at work." She challenges pastors to be "Spirit-led, excellent in high standards, fruitful in ministry and accountable in measurements."

"God is doing something," said Bishop Goodpaster, "and The United Methodist Church will be a part of that! It's bubbling up!"

"It's an exciting time to preach," he added. "In a

jaded culture, the church can lift up real and lasting values. We can learn to deal with cultural ambiguities because of the certainties of Christianity."

\* Dr. Donald W. Haynes is an instructor in United Methodist studies at Hood Theological Seminary. Reprinted with permission of the United Methodist Reporter ([www.umportal.org](http://www.umportal.org))

Asked, "what is not working?"

Bishops' answers included:

the Boards of Ordained Ministry, the appointment system, Charge Conference, general agencies and "our antiquated communication system."

"Wow, what's left standing?" asked the moderator.

## Ministry study commission creates four working groups

The 24-member committee charged with clarifying the ordering of ministry within The United Methodist Church has organized into four working groups to explore the theological foundations of ordained ministry.

Meeting March 17-18, the commission divided into groups that will focus on ordination, sacramental authority, orders, and candidacy. The commission also has created an online group to work between meetings. Commission members reported on the body's work during the March 19-21 meeting of the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry. "We are excited about the progress we have made, the direction we have set, and the beginning we have experienced," said NC Conference Bishop Al Gwinn, chairperson of the commission.



Bishop Al Gwinn

## Church's worldwide nature from page 17

bers of the early study be included in the new committee. The new group also will consider the financial implications of proposed changes in structure and report in 2012.

"The General Conference has asked this committee to do work that will lead the church in thinking about its future shape and practice," Palmer said. "I pray and trust that they will do their work with deep faith, enormous sensitivity and an eye only to the glory of God and the mission of the church...making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

"The Council of Bishops and the Connectional Table have appointed a diverse group of gifted United Methodists from all geographical regions to continue the conversation of the worldwide nature of our Church," Hopkins said. "We need to surround the members of this study committee with prayer as they draft the next chapter of God's worldwide mission for United Methodists."

## Work of MERCI ministry ongoing Continued from page 1

ing Early Response Training and United Methodist Volunteers in Mission training on Friday and Saturday, May 15-16, at MERCI.

The MERCI ministry is primarily dedicated to disaster recovery, including early response and long-term recovery through the rehabilitation of homes and churches affected by natural disasters.

With a grant from the NC Housing Finance Agency, MERCI has been able to offer housing repairs to impoverished homeowners in Wayne County. Footprints, the summer ministry at MERCI, also offers housing repair as part of the experience for teenage students in the program.

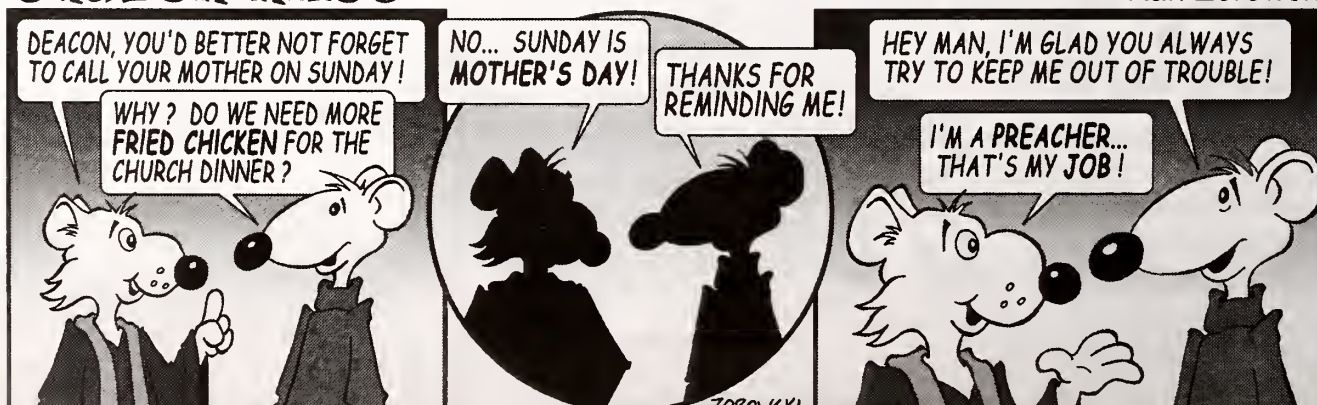
A recent decision of the MERCI Board brought a reduction to the staff at the agency. Three positions were eliminated due to funding shortfalls. The decision was made to assure the long-term viability of MERCI.

If no reductions were made in the staffing or in the \$450,000 budget, MERCI would have used all the reserves available within months, and certainly before the end of 2009. The agency relies on donations for its operating costs, and most of the budget was designated for staff support.

If the 2009 hurricane season in North Carolina brings disaster to any part of the Conference area, MERCI is ready to respond. The reduction of staff does not diminish the mission or the ability of MERCI to handle disaster relief as a coordinating agency.

## Church Mice

Karl Zorowski



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## BIRTHS

**Christopher Fernando Mora Rodriguez**, son of Jose F. (NB: Pine Valley - Associate/Hispanic-Latino ministries) and Diane Mora was born March 24.

## DEATHS

**COOK, Evelyn**, widow of the Rev. Irving Cook, died April 2. A funeral service was held on April 4.



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# calendar ANNOUNCEMENTS

## "Theology of the Body" seminar

A seminar for clergy and laity, "Theology of the Body: An Ecumenical Introduction," is planned on theological issues related to human sexuality, marriage, and human dignity. "Theology of the Body" is a book by John Paul II, which is composed of 130 his addresses. Dr. Paul J. Griffiths, the Warren Professor of Catholic Theology at Duke Divinity School, will provide the seminar's presentations. The event will take place in New Bern on May 21 from 9:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. For a registration form, go to [www.lifewatch.org](http://www.lifewatch.org) or call (252)-726-2175. This event is sponsored by the New Bern District of The United Methodist Church, Lifewatch, and Transforming Congregations.

## Grants Available for Advertising

Monies are available to local United Methodist churches and/or districts for media advertising in 2009. A church planning to advertise during Back-to-school or Advent should submit an application for a Matching Grant online from May 1 - June 1. Visit [www.umcom.org](http://www.umcom.org) and select Support Center/Matching Grants. Hard copy applications are no longer accepted. UM Communications can help coordinate the advertising campaign. Igniting Ministry offers assistance with media estimates, planning and placement for television, radio, cinema and billboards (IMMediaServices@umcom.org). Note: UMC must pre-approve advertising quotes before applying for a Matching Grant. Applications can be emailed to IMGrants@umcom.org or faxed to 615-742-5777.

## Trail Hike Registrations Due

The Appalachian Trail Hike for high school age youth will be June 20-27. The registration deadline is May 22. There are limited spaces so early registration is advised. The registration form can be found in the 2009 Youth Events brochure which is available for download at [www.nccumc.org/youth/events/](http://www.nccumc.org/youth/events/).

## Connecting With Campus Ministry

Many high school seniors know where they will be attending college in the fall by now. Pastors and youth leaders are encouraged to make these high school students aware of the United Methodist campus ministry available to them. In many universities there are Wesley Foundations or Wesley Fellowships that are the United Methodist ministry to, with and among college students on those campuses. In some cases, United Methodists are in partnership with other denominations (such as Presbyterian or Lutheran) for a United Christian Campus Ministry. Many private schools will have a Chaplain and religious life programs. For colleges/universities in NC - this campus ministry information is listed at <http://nccumc.org/youngadults/campus-ministries/>.

## Event for Youth and Young Adults to Explore their Call to Ministry

EXPLORATION 2009, scheduled for Nov. 13-15 in Dallas, will address The United Methodist Church's need for young clergy by offering youth and young adults who feel God's call a chance to explore that call. "Today more than ever, the denomination needs to sponsor events that invite, train, and support young people as they answer their call to ordained ministry," said the Rev. Meg Lassiat, director of student ministries, vocation, and enlistment at the Board of Higher Education and Ministry, which sponsors EXPLORATION.

Aimed at high school seniors through young adults aged 24 who are considering a call to ordained ministry, EXPLORATION participants will have the chance to talk with admissions staff from the 13 United Methodist schools of theology, attend workshops, and take part in small-group discussions. For more information, or to register for EXPLORATION, please visit [www.gbhem.org/exploration](http://www.gbhem.org/exploration) or [www.explorecalling.org](http://www.explorecalling.org).

## conference CALENDAR

### May

- 1 World Day of Prayer/  
May Friendship Day
- 2 Dia de los Niños - Children's  
Day celebration, 10am
- 5 Academy for Leadership  
Excellence Days of  
Learning, 9:30am, St. James  
UMC, Greenville
- 11 Conference Connectional  
Table, 10am, Methodist  
Building
- 12 Christian Educators  
Fellowship, 12:30pm
- 13 Aging to Perfection Older  
Adult Event, St. James  
UMC; Greenville
- 15 - 16 Conference UMW  
Spiritual Enrichment  
Retreat, Haymount UMC,  
Fayetteville
- 23 NC Conference Historical  
Society, Boydton, VA
- 30 NC Conference Asian  
Celebration, 10:30am,  
AGAPE Korean UMC, Cary

### June

- 10-13 Annual Conference,  
Greenville
- 11-14 UMW South Atlantic  
Regional School
- 20-27 Appalachian Trail Hike  
for Youth
- 22-27 Summer Breakaway  
for Youth
- 29-July 2 SEJ and UMC Historical  
Society's Joint Meeting,  
Lake Junaluska

For more information on upcoming  
North Carolina Conference events,  
visit [www.nccumc.org](http://www.nccumc.org)  
and click on "Calendar."

## CLASSIFIEDS

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**PART-TIME YOUTH** Director, Four Oaks NC to lead a group of 20-30 youth. Min of 2-yr Assoc degree and min of 2-yr exp working with youth grades 6-12 req. 10-15hrs/wk. For more info email [wyow@nccumc.org](mailto:wyow@nccumc.org) Send resume by May 1, 2009 to FOUMC, PO Box 177, Four Oaks NC 27524. Website: [www.fouroaksumc.org](http://www.fouroaksumc.org)

**NORTH MYRTLE BEACH** oceanfront, 4bdms, 3bath condo, first floor, big-screen TV, conveniently located to shopping & entertainment, no pets. Call Paul 252-531-3918.

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**EMERALD ISLE BEACH** Cottage for Christian families. Second row, sleeps eight or more. Three bedrooms, two baths, a/c, phone and cable. No pets. \$865 per week, \$360 per weekend. Special arrangements for youth groups up to 20. Tommy and Jean Tunstall, 5273 Raleigh Rd., Benson, NC 27504 919-934-4401 or [jeantunstall@embarqmail.com](mailto:jeantunstall@embarqmail.com).

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# around the CONFERENCE



## Offices Consecrated for Academy

Offices for the Academy for Leadership Excellence at Edenton Street UMC in Raleigh were consecrated March 22. In addition to offices, four classrooms were included in the service. Participating in the service were the Rev. Ned Hill, Edenton Street UMC senior pastor; Larry Coats, academy board chair; Bishop Al Gwinn (shown above on extreme right) who conducted the consecration service; and the Rev. Brian Gentle, interim executive director of the academy. The academy was established to provide leadership mentoring, training, and development for church leaders in support of the local church. It is privately funded through philanthropic support from families and individuals who have chosen to invest in the leaders of the NC Conference. Further information about the academy is offered at <http://nccumc.org/academy/>.



## Chestnut Street Youth Prepare for Mission Trip

The youth of Chestnut Street UMC of Lumberton held their annual Spaghetti Supper on February 21. Three hundred plates were sold to raise money for their Salkehatchie Mission trip. Although this is a youth event, people of all ages come together to ensure a successful supper including parents who no longer have youth members but still participate in the preparation and serving.



## EbonyYouth Christian Vocation Exploration

Sixty youth and 12 mentor/counselors from across the jurisdiction, gathered at Lake Junaluska in March for the EbonyYouth Christian Vocation Exploration Retreat. The weekend retreat provided a time for young African-Americans to discover, explore, and celebrate a call to Christian ministry in The United Methodist Church. During this time together, the youth and adult mentors participated in worship, small group sessions, fellowship and mentoring sessions centered on discerning God's call to vocational ministry. The participants were introduced to not only local church pastors but missionaries, Christian educators, deaconesses, Christian counselors, and ministers of music. The purpose of the weekend retreat is to build on the future of the Black Church in The United Methodist Church and prepare the next generation to accept the mantle of leadership in African-American churches. ABOVE: (L to R) The Rev. Marcus Singleton, pastor of the Granville-Vance Charge, Jay Carroll of St. Peter's UMC in Oxford, Simone Cheryl Thompson of Wilson Temple UMC, Jaalil Hart of Wilson Temple UMC, and Dr. Lawrence Johnson, NC Conference staff representative.

## Owen Recognized as Pastor Emeritus by First UMC, Siler City

Person County native the Rev. Travis W. Owen (left) was recognized as Pastor Emeritus of First UMC, Siler City, by unanimous vote of the Church Council. Owen retired from First UMC in 1992, after serving 37 years in the ministry. The Rev. Mike Sykes (right), current pastor, presented the certificate of recognition to Owen during the Sunday morning service, March 22. Owen grew up in Grace UMC, Roxboro.



## Kipling UMC Celebrates a Growing Congregation

Since the beginning of the year, Kipling UMC in Harnett County has seen attendance on Sunday mornings grow from 75-80 to 88-135 in worship. "The Lord is truly blessing the mission and ministry at Kipling," said the Rev. Melinda Ivey, Kipling's pastor. In 2009, the church has welcomed 15 new members into the congregation. Pictured above are those who joined the Kipling congregation on Palm Sunday (L-R) Donna & Thomas

Johnson, Terry & Jon Patterson, Tara Patterson (in the middle acting silly), Pastor Melinda Ivey, Brandon Patterson, Tasha Temple, and Jason Baker. Front row (L-R) are the Confirmation Class who were confirmed, baptized, and joined the church. They are Billy Mangum, Aaron Baker and Patrick Patterson. In addition to growth in worship attendance, Kipling's Family Night fellowship meal and devotion has grown from 15 to 55.

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## NC-based food and faith advocate granted fellowship

The Food & Society Policy Fellows program named NC-based food and faith advocate Fred Bahnson and eight others from around the country with backgrounds in farming, public health, filmmaking and policy research to promote strategies for achieving a more sustainable, healthy and



Fred Bahnson

equitable food system.

Bahnson is the Director of Anathoth Community Garden at Cedar Grove UMC and has written extensively on expanding the involvement of faith-based communities in food and agriculture. Through multi-

disciplinary approaches including a Congregation Supported Agriculture program, Bahnson plans on using his fellowship to inspire dialogue among church communities in support of agricultural activism.

"I'm honored to receive this fellowship," said Bahnson. "It reflects a growing recognition that churches have a major role to play in fixing our broken food system. I'd like to

see the 'church lawn' become an anachronism; that same piece of soil could be growing tasty collard greens and sweet potatoes for the neighborhood."

The fellowship buys a portion of the Fellows' time for two years, allowing them to spend time on media outreach and participate in policy and communications trainings.

"As part of this new class, Fred will work alongside some of the nation's leaders on food, agriculture, public health and social justice," said Mark Muller, director of the Fellows program.

"The way food is grown, processed and distributed has a tremendous influence on health, the economy and our culture. The Fellows are building on the momentum for a fresher, healthier, more sustainable and more equitable food system."

The program is designed to facilitate the Fellows' use of mass media channels to inform and shape the public agenda for food. Together, they will work to affect local, regional and national policy through strategic communication efforts.

For more on the 2009 Food & Society Fellows, go to: [www.foodandsocietyfellows.org](http://www.foodandsocietyfellows.org).

## "And there was no one to till the ground" Loss of farmland as a vocational crisis for the Church

A commentary by Elizabeth Bahnson \*

In a recent article in the *Raleigh News & Observer*, Andrea Weigl reported that "North Carolina has lost more than 11,000 farms and about half a million acres of farmland in the past 20 years."

The loss of farmers and farmland in NC is coupled with rising land prices—a 58% increase in the value of farmland in the past five years.

We may be tempted to celebrate the "advances" in our state's economy and perhaps an "improvement" in the quality of life for rural folk, but those of us in the Church should take pause.

Indeed, if we find ourselves in a rural church, we may find a different story coming from the pews. Once, a farmer could make a living off of 10 acres of tobacco and many communities were mostly self-sufficient.

Now, things have changed. Over 50 acres of tobacco have to be farmed in order to get by, and not many in the next generation are interested in working that hard for so little return.

Loss of farmers and farmland is a theological problem. According to Genesis 2, humans are made in order to tend God's garden. "And there was no one to till the ground...then the Lord formed man from the dust of the ground...And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed" (Gen. 2:5b, 7a, 10).

The first human is in fact made from the soil, *adam* is made from the *adamah* (fertile soil), and is put in the garden to tend that same soil. According to the biblical view of the world, humanity's primary vocation as a soil-creature is as soil-keeper, to work and watch the soil on which all of created life depends.

Industrial agriculture does not reflect care for the soil. As a result of mono-cropping, over-irrigation, and the heavy use of petro-chemical fertilizers and pesticides on many farms, over half of North America's top-soil is now in the Gulf of Mexico. The area around the Mississippi Delta is called the Dead Zone because the

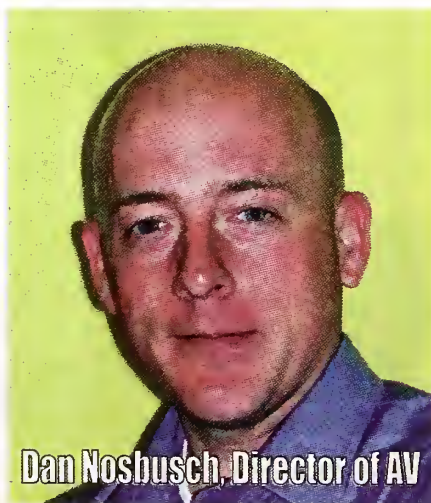
high levels of agricultural waste form algae blooms and make it impossible for sea-life to survive. The contemporary agricultural economy is destroying ecosystems as well as local farm communities.

Like the prophets Amos and Hosea, the church needs to cry out against the injustice of our current agricultural economy which threatens our biblical responsibility to care for soil—the source of life for all created beings.

\* Elizabeth Bahnson is a graduate of Duke Divinity School. She is a musician and runs a small cottage farm with her family in Efland.

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3. Turn left at 10th Street. Go about two blocks and bear to the right onto 5th Street. Note: This street can be easily missed.
4. Keep on 5th Street until you see Hickory Street. There is a highway sign for Cypress Glen in front of Coats Wahl School.
5. Turn Right onto Hickory Street and you are there.

Takes about 12 minutes from the Convention Center.



**Shuttle Buses Provided from  
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# North Carolina Conference Christian ADVOCATE

Volume 154 / Number 6

June 2009

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## Special Pull-Out Section

- Convention Center Map
- Workshop Descriptions
- Budget Information
- Taizé Worship Service
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Pages 9-12

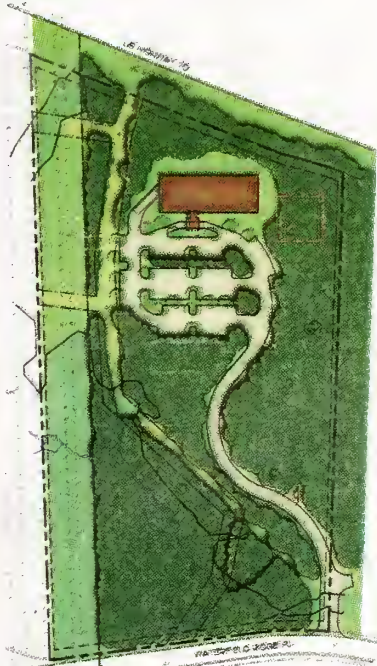
## NC Conference building project well-underway

By Christine Dodson

Progress on the new Annual Conference building is well underway and design of the facility is almost complete. The exterior plans and interior floor plans have been completed and approved by the Conference Design Team. The facility will be on Waterfield Ridge Place in Garner and is located just off of Greenfield Parkway at the intersection of Interstate 40 and Highway 70.

The lot is just over 14 acres with approximately 10 usable acres. The building will be positioned at the north end of the lot with the driveway coming in from Waterfield Ridge Place on the south end of the lot. The site plan has been approved and all pertinent permits have been attained to begin site construction. The driveway will be shared with the adjacent property and will include a bridge to cross a small creek on the south side of the property.

Work to begin the bridge and clearing for the driveway began in mid-May. A ground breaking ceremony was scheduled for May 29.



*Advocate* did not permit including photographs of the ground breaking. Those photographs should be available for the July edition.)

Preliminary work completed has included surveying the property and establishing the vegetation and soil erosion protection areas. The site plan includes provisions to retain many of the existing trees and maintaining the natural look of the lot as much as possible.

Initial plans for the building have included an approved exterior building design and landscaping plan. The building will be

See "NCC builds," page 8



Before the theft, Rev. Greg Moore and worshipers at All Saints' UMC gathered around the baptismal font for services of baptism and reception of new members into the church. The font was stored in the stolen trailer along with the church's sound system, communion pottery, and equipment for the nursery and children's church.

## Churches help All Saints' UMC observe joy on Easter

By Ted Avery \*

When some United Methodist churches moved quickly to meet the needs of All Saints' UMC, a new church startup in the Brier Creek area, not even an Easter Grinch could steal the joy of Easter.

While searching for a permanent place to worship, the All Saints' UMC was using a trailer that transported items required for services at temporary worship sites.

After that trailer was stolen the Tuesday before Easter, the prospect of a smooth Easter worship at the Brier Creek Community Center looked dim. Brier Creek is west of the

Raleigh-Durham Airport off Highway 70. The Rev. Greg Moore, All Saints' pastor, said that the church almost immediately received assistance from sister churches as well as from the local, regional and international communities. "We were overwhelmed by the support."

After learning of the theft, the Rev. David Wehrle, pastor at the new Trinity UMC startup in Cleveland township, contacted Moore to see if Trinity could provide any assistance.

A mobile sound system was one of the critical items that All Saints' lost in the trailer theft. Trinity had

See "Churches help," page 5

## Wilmington District churches continue support of MHFC's 1-K for 1-Kid Campaign

Despite the recession, donors remain committed to supporting the child, youth, and family care work of Methodist Home for Children.

On May 3, United Methodist churches in the Wilmington District joined together to kick-off the Methodist Home for Children's "1K

for 1 Kid" Annual Campaign. The event was hosted by Oleander UMC and Pine Valley UMC (the Rev. Linda Taylor and the Rev. Bill Braswell.)

The celebration included a service of worship and music from the Oleander UMC Children's Rock Group and from the Pine Valley UMC Chapel

Choir and Girls' Ensemble.

Founders of the conference-wide campaign, Al Everett (United Methodist Men district president) and Rev. Linda Taylor were moved to action in 2007 after learning that it

See "1K for 1Kid," page 6



LEFT:  
Pine Valley UMC  
Girls' Ensemble



RIGHT:  
Oleander UMC  
Children's  
Rock Group



RIGHT:  
Members  
of the Pine  
Valley UMC  
Chapel  
Choir

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## Music in Missions: IGNITE Sings and Serves in Washington, D.C.

IGNITE recently lit up Washington, DC on their 3rd annual Music in Missions trip over spring break. IGNITE (an acronym for "In God, Nothing is Too Extreme") is the Youth Worship Arts Ministry of Pine Valley UMC in Wilmington under the direction of PJ Bolduc. Forty youth and adults volunteered at the Capitol Area Food Bank and Martha's Table, two agencies that reach the hungry in urban DC. They prepared over 1,100 desserts for the soup kitchen's huge Easter dinner! They also had an incredible worship experience as they presented a program of songs and skits at the Central Union Mission Homeless Shelter as well as the Potomac Area Nursing Home. Saturday, IGNITE marched down the middle of Constitution Avenue singing and dancing with a throng of 1,100 children and youth in the National Cherry Blossom Festival Parade. The trip was rounded out with visits to the Smithsonian and the National Mall.



L-R: Christine Dodson, Tom Greener, Bishop Al Gwinn, and Alan Sasser gather with other members of the Stewardship Team meeting to talk about aligning ministry and budgets. (Photo by Bill Norton)

## CCT prioritizes mission areas, gathers to evaluate funding

By Bill Norton \*

How well ministries align with the conference vision was the over-arching question before the Conference Connectional Table (CCT) and its teams at the CCT meeting on May 5.

Bishop Al Gwinn sought to center the discussion when he pointed out that vision has to be recast every 26 days. "People forget, they take things for granted, he said

The mission/vision of the North Carolina Annual Conference is: "Healthy Congregations and Effective Leaders in Every Place Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World."

Everything in the conference should align with the mission, Gwinn said. "Our focus has to be on healthy congregations and effective leaders."

Since the previous CCT meeting, the four teams (Outreach Ministry, Leadership, Stewardship, and Christian Formation) met to prioritize the mission areas within their team which receive conference funds.

Emily Innes, chair of the CCT, provided questions for each team to use

in getting "serious about our vision, mission, and purpose. When we are thinking about vision, we are thinking about the local church," she said, encouraging each team to begin their meeting with prayer to guide their discussion and evaluation.

After each team had met together, they joined each other for a time of sharing. The Rev. Grace Hackney told about visiting a fruit farm where trees were planted at 45 degrees. This was so they would grow slanted so the fruit could be easier to harvest.

"Already established ministries might need to be tethered a bit to give new ministries space to bear fruit," she said.

Sharing some of the celebrations found in the Stewardship Team, the Rev. Tom Greener cited the *Advocate* for moving toward self-sustainability, discussions that the Annual Conference might meet fewer days, and the Insurance Committee's going to no increase in the cost of ministry for the seventh year.

He also shared discussion about some ministry areas that are self-sustaining receiving less or no conference funds and re-aligning some clergy benefits when financial support is provided by other areas.

Another idea shared was reducing the number of districts. A district superintendent and a teaching pastor would work side-by-side. The D.S. would do the administrative and supervisory work. The teaching pastor would provide training to churches.

In his closing remarks, Gwinn said, while referring to the effects of the economy "I say from the faith standpoint, thank the Lord we are being put on our knees and we are re-examining everything and are asking if we really need all these things and status. They are not as important as we once thought they were."

\* Bill Norton is conference communications director and Advocate editor.

## A Heartfelt Thank You...

...to the more than 385 congregations that raised over \$148,000 for Methodist Home for Children Sunday 2009. **You have helped us make a difference in the world...one child at a time.**

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# Carr UMC in Cedar Grove is building 'green'

By Lisa Mills \*

As many celebrated Easter, Carr UMC in Cedar Grove was celebrating something else: The building of their new fellowship hall and Mother Nature.

The building is the first "green" church project in northern Orange County, the church's pastor said.

"Having a better facility will allow us to better do what we do, which is to connect to the community," said

Brenda Davis, pastor of the church located at N.C. 49 and Carr Store Road in north-west Orange County.

The process of building green includes replacing the original structure. Plans for the building started forming in January 2003, when Davis became pastor at the church. Through several meetings with church members, she said she heard a lot of complaints of how the 90-year-old space needed to be refurbished.

Congregants were starting to go to other churches because the facility was in such disrepair and lacked handicapped accessibility, she said. In 2008, the church membership was 57, and the average attendance

in worship was 40 for this rural congregation.

In preparation for the change, Davis attended several seminars at Duke University and in Charlotte on green building techniques. The Carr congregation decided to construct the new fellowship hall as an energy-efficient building.

Last October, the original fellowship building was torn down, and construction began on the new, "greener" fellowship hall.

Builders originally planned to add to the facility, but when they started tearing up the floorboards, they found so much damage they told the congregation it would be better to tear it down and start over, Davis said.

"That's when the congregation really got motivated to do something," she said.

"However, the congregation's timing didn't foresee this economy, so we keep

going on in faith."

Linda Foushee, co-chair of the building committee, said the project is being funded by donations, the congregation and bank loans. They have also applied for money from the Duke Endowment.



The fellowship hall under construction is shown behind the sanctuary, built in 1916. The hall replaces an old WWII Army barracks which served as the fellowship hall from 1946 to September 2008.

## Daniel, Strother named as new district superintendents

There will be two new district superintendents on Bishop Al Gwinn's Cabinet following Annual Conference held June 10-13.

Francis M. Daniel, pastor of Wesley Memorial UMC in Wilmington, will become the Wilmington District superintendent and Jon Strother, pastor of Benson Memorial in Raleigh, will become the Raleigh District superintendent, Bishop Gwinn has announced. Both appointments are effective July 1.

Daniels, in addition to Wesley Memorial in Wilmington, has served pastorates at Queen Street in Kinston, Divine Street in Dunn, Hampstead in Hampstead, and Calvary Charge in Lillington.

He has a bachelor's degree from

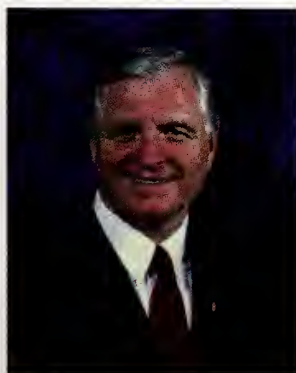
Pembroke State University and Masters of Divinity from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

He and his wife, Gail, have three adult children.

As noted in the April *Advocate*, Strother will replace Tim Russell, the current Raleigh District superintendent, who has also been serving as assistant to the bishop and director of ministerial relations.

Russell will continue serve as assistant to the bishop and ministerial relations director.

Daniel and Strother began sitting with the Cabinet during the appointment process after their new appointment was announced in the churches they currently serve.



Francis Daniel



At the groundbreaking: Rick Ledford, the builder from Energy Tech Builders, Inc., Wake Forest; Randy Yarbrough, one of the co-chairs of Building Committee; Mrs. Ann Ward, wife of Herman Ward; the Rev. Herman Ward, retired clergy neighbor who was the presiding elder at charge conferences pertaining to the new construction, and the Rev. Bill Gattis, Burlington district superintendent.

"We were so limited before because of space," Foushee said. "But now, we're putting in a new fellowship hall, three new classrooms and a kitchen."

Among the green techniques used in the new building are Insulated Concrete Forms (ICF) walls, which are made from Styrofoam, rebars and cement, and provide better insulation than traditional construction materials. Additional items being built "green" include a water heater, double-paned windows and a sealed roof and crawlspace.

The extra expense of going green is about \$39,000, plus the additional cost of a consultant for the architect with ICF wall experience. They are also hoping to include a prayer garden where people can purchase engraved bricks to line the walkway, to help fund the construction.

The total cost of going green for the church is more than they originally expected, she said, but in the long run it will save money through efficiency. The project is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

Davis said building a green fellowship building is part of a larger plan.

"I believe God has a special plan for this church," Davis said. "And that is why God enabled the Carr congregation to build."

The church has continued to serve the community despite their limited space, Davis said, by providing food banks and helping with the charity God Did It House, volunteering in nursing homes and helping members with tasks such as cutting wood.

"Even when we had no fellowship hall, we tried our best to reach out to the community," Foushee said. "When people see the construction of the green walls they are fascinated and say they have never seen anything like it."

\* Lisa Mills is a staff writer for *The News of Orange County*. This article originally ran in *The News of Orange County* on April 29.

### Carr UMC Project

- ◆ Total cost for fellowship hall, 3 classrooms and kitchen is estimated at \$411,000
- ◆ Cost for "green" choices is \$39,000 plus consultant fees
- ◆ Church was organized in 1915 and the sanctuary built in 1916.
- ◆ In 1946 an old WWII army barracks was moved to the site and was used as the fellowship hall until Sept 2008 when it was torn down in preparation for the new building now being erected.
- ◆ In 2008, the congregation had 58 members and an average worship attendance of 40.

### Insulated concrete foam (ICF) walls

The design for the ICF walls uses two foam panels interlocked with approximately 4 inches of space between them to create a hollow mold. Concrete, reinforced with steel rods, is poured into the space between the foam walls and fills all gaps.

- ◆ R-value of 50 (as compared to R-19 for 2x6 wood-framed walls)
- ◆ Sound proof
- ◆ Wind rating over 150 MPH
- ◆ Vapor resistant
- ◆ 70% more efficient than stick built
- ◆ Contain no volatile organic compounds (VOCs)
- ◆ Long-lasting durability

See "Superintendents" page 4



## Jerusalem UMC answers the call to "feed my sheep"

Thanks to a grant from the NC Conference Office of Missions, Jerusalem UMC in Laurinburg has been able to further live out its vision statement of being: "A Church Committed to Communicating God's Love Through Its Ministry" by expanding its Feeding Ministry. The ministry began in 2006 with a strong commitment from the church to touch the lives of the people in Scotland and Robeson Counties.

Although the church was committed to reaching beyond the walls and serve the greater community, resources were limited and the program was only able to give out bags of food once per month.

Prayers were answered in 2008 with a mission grant which allowed the Feeding Ministry to expand. Now, the congregation at Jerusalem is sharing the Word of God through devotion time and offering a hot meal. The first hot meal was served this spring. Drawing more than 100 persons from throughout the community, this time of worship and fellowship was a celebration of love and service.

"As everyone sat at the table together, God was experienced in a new way. The radical hospitality that was extended opened the door to risk-taking ministry and to new revelations for this small rural church. The experience was awesome and all in attendance just sat back and watched God be God," said Gypsie Murdagh, pastor of Jerusalem UMC.



## Superintendents continued from page 3

Powell Osteen, the current Wilmington District superintendent, will be appointed senior pastor at Apex UMC. David Brownlee, the current pastor at Apex, will be appointed to First UMC in Jackson, MS.

The pastoral appointments for Wesley Memorial and Benson Memorial will be announced at the close of Annual Conference on June 13.

Superintendents are presiding elders supervising pastors in a specific geographic area.

The NC Conference has 12 superintendents who sit with the bishop as the Cabinet.

A major responsibility of the Cabinet is the appointment of pastors to local churches or to other areas of ministry.



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### Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org).

Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

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Bishop Al Gwinn offered prayers of blessings upon each child and parent who came forward at the *Día de los Niños* / Children's Day Festival. (Photos by Bill Norton)

## Attendance doubles at *Día de los Niños* / Children's Day 2009

On Saturday, April 25, about 300 people, families and children from churches and communities across the NC Conference attended the / Children's Day Festival. Attendance doubled from 2008.

The annual gathering was organized by the Conference office of Hispanic/Latino ministries and was hosted by Saint Francis UMC in Cary.

Groups attended representing United Methodist ministries from the Sanford, Durham, Raleigh, Elizabeth City, and New Bern districts.

The relationships these ministries foster and support within the Latino community led to the participation of members from other denominations such as the Catholic, Baptist, and Pentecostal churches.

The invitation to join in the festivities was broadcast by *Qué Pasa* radio as they interviewed organizers and participants about the reasons such an event is important not only to The United Methodist Church, but also to

the community at large.

Bishop Al Gwinn spoke to the children and their families about God's love and plans for their lives.

He offered individual prayers of blessings upon each child and parent who came forward. Leaders from the Conference gathered together with Bishop Gwinn to add their prayers for him and the children.

The day also included time for playing and running on the inflatable bounce rooms and slides. Musicians and magicians entertained.

The organizers of the event extend thanks to Tom Hollis, senior pastor, and Wes Coble, operations associate at Saint Francis UMC.

Thanks are given for contributions from *The Bakeshop el Panecito*; *Klass*; *Semillas de Amor* women's group from *Luz del Pueblo*; and *Los Hermanos Lara*.

*Qué Pasa*, a Spanish-language newspaper with state-wide circulation, provided advertising; and approximately 25 volunteers from

ministries across the Conference volunteered their time to help with the event.

"The cooperative effort of ministry leaders and their shared love of Christ for all His children ensures that events like *Día de los Niños* continue to embrace those whom society often marginalizes," said Joanna Cafferty, a volunteer at *Día de los Niños*.



The children focus on a magician's tricks.



# New fellows join Duke's Thriving Rural Communities Initiative

The Thriving Rural Communities Initiative selected seven new Rural Ministry Fellows receiving full scholarships to attend Duke Divinity School and develop their leadership for rural churches.

Recipients of the Fellowship covenant to spend at least the first five years of their ministry within the rural United Methodist Church in the State of North Carolina.

The Fellowship is a merit-based scholarship sponsored by The Duke Endowment covering the cost of full tuition expenses to Duke Divinity School. Over three years of study, a Rural Ministry Fellowship represents an investment of more than \$50,000 in an individual student.

Recipients of the award also receive a stipend to serve their 10-week summer field education placements in the program's partner Thriving Rural Congregations.

They also participate in enrichment experiences that include colloquia with gifted scholars, leaders, and pastors to explore the "best practices" of rural ministry.

The Fellowship includes a formational travel experience to encounter the Methodist church in Mexico and an alumni network upon graduation.

The mission of the program is to share and strengthen the gifts of

North Carolina's rural clergy, congregations, communities, and creation in the name of Christ.

It works to train new leaders, resource current leaders, connect clergy, and inspire faithful leadership within the rural church and rural communities.

The program is a partnership of Duke Divinity School, The Duke Endowment, and the NC and Western NC Annual Conferences of The United Methodist Church.

The initiative is also a part of Leadership Education at Duke Divinity, bringing together the school's non-degree programs and scholarship on leadership development, pastoral excellence, clergy health, rural ministry, Hispanic ministry, youth formation, reconciliation, and end-of-life care.

The Divinity School's Scholarship Awards Committee and the Thriving Rural Communities Initiative have named the following students to the Rural Ministry Fellowship beginning in the 2009-2010 academic year:

## NC Conference:

- ♦ **Kimberly Lynn Cole.** She holds a 2007 bachelor's degree from the State University of New York-Fredonia, and a 2009 master's of education in special education

from Grand Canyon University. Cole is a kindergarten teacher in Wake County. A member of Saint Francis UMC in Cary, she has been a volunteer in mission in Mozambique and in Mississippi.

- ♦ **Howard Anthony James.** A 2003 cum laude graduate from the UNC-Greensboro, James has worked extensively as an engineer and with the youth ministry of his church. He and his wife Tammy are members of First UMC in Graham.

- ♦ **James Grady Jones, Jr.** A graduate of the UNC-Charlotte, Jones is in his second year of study for the M.Div. at Duke Divinity School. A former technical sales representative in the biomedical industry, he now serves as a student pastor at Lea's Chapel UMC in Roxboro.

- ♦ **Stuart Patrick Murphy.** Murphy graduated from Methodist College in 2009 with a bachelor's in psychology. A devoted community servant, he is a member of Trinity UMC in Elizabethtown.

## Western NC Conference:

- ♦ **Bradley Thomas Hinton.** He is a 2008 graduate of Appalachian State University, where he majored in religious studies. A member of the ski patrol and an E.M.T. for the Watauga County Rescue Squad, Hinton is both a member and a youth leader at Boone UMC.

- ♦ **Kevin Christian Miller.** Miller graduated from Pfeiffer College in 2006 with a bachelor's in Christian education, and is a teacher at Arborbrook Christian Academy in Matthews. He has served on mission teams to Haiti and Bolivia. He and his wife Katie are members of Harrisburg UMC.

- ♦ **Lucy Brent Robbins.** She received her bachelor's degree from the UNC-Greensboro in 2000 and completed her master's in education there in 2004. Robbins is currently director of Undergraduate Student Services as UNC-Greensboro. She is also an active member of Christ UMC in Greensboro, working extensively with their youth and international outreach programs.

## Churches help All Saints' from page 1

just been given a sound system by Greater Heights UMC, a new church start in Clayton which is led by the Rev. Matt Evans.

Trinity was then able to provide it to All Saints' in time for their Easter Sunday service. Wehrle helped All Saints' set up the system Easter morning and stayed to attend the service with his family.

University UMC in Chapel Hill lent their processional cross. Apex UMC provided wireless lapel microphones. Additionally, Pleasant Grove UMC in Raleigh sent monetary donations.

Cards of encouragement and offers of assistance also came from churches in South Carolina and from as far away as the Methodist Church in England. "It went quickly from being our (All Saints') problem to being Our (the Church's) problem," Moore said.

The outpouring of help enabled All Saints' to conduct the Easter Sunday Service with minimal impact to the proceedings.

In an Easter victory, the church was blessed with its highest weekly worship attendance (209).

"Jesus and his people seem to do their best work when hanging out with a couple of thieves," Moore said.

Wehrle, the Trinity pastor, has a message for the folks that "borrowed" the All Saints' trailer - "tell them that we have something far more valuable to give them - life in Jesus Christ!"

\* *Ted Avery, a member of Bethesda UMC in Durham, is a freelance writer.*

## Plans for hymnal revision halted

Work on the revision of *The United Methodist Hymnal*, authorized by the 2008 General Conference, has been stopped.

"With great regret, we acknowledge that the hymnal revision project cannot continue this quadrennium due to unexpected and extraordinary financial constraints resulting from the world-wide economic crisis," Bishop Ernest S. Lyght, chair of the Hymnal Revision Committee, told the members of the committee.

In January, The United Methodist Publishing House (UMPH), which is completely self-funded, slowed work on the revision to allow time for a

See "Hymnal" page 6

## Write to Inspire

### A Spiritual/Inspirational Writing Workshop



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**Cecil Murphey**, The writer of over 108 published books including the best seller *90 Minutes in Heaven* for Don Piper and the follow ups including *Heaven is Real*. He leads the agenda for this event as our keynote speaker. He will also present a workshop on the basics of writing.

Murphey says, "When I teach I feel as if I am God's visible hands reaching out to encourage, enrich and educate others."

### Also Featuring:

**Marjorie Wentworth**, The Poet Laureate of South Carolina. Marjorie has taught workshops on spirituality and writing at Charleston Southern University. She will lead our workshops on poetry writing.



**Holly McClure**, A literary agent and author of 4 published books. Holly will share storytelling techniques and offer an additional workshop on how to get your work published.

Details online [www.epworthbythesea.org](http://www.epworthbythesea.org) or call 912-638-8688



# Marva Dawn addresses NC Conference clergy

By Bob Bergland \*

Nearly 500 clergy gathered at Jarvis Memorial UMC in Greenville in April. The featured speaker was Dr. Marva J. Dawn, considered by many ministers to be one of the most theologically engaging leaders in Christianity today.

The day-long event was hosted by the Order of Elders, Order of Deacons and Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members of the NC Annual Conference.

The theme for the day, "Pastoral Ministry: Our Life Together," was captured in Bishop Al Gwinn's message during the opening worship service – "God never intended us to do ministry alone."

Dawn's address centered on "the unity of [the] orders and what divides them." Drawing from her book, *Powers, Weakness, and the Tabernacling of God*, she identified the powers and principalities actively engaged in society today as Technology, Politics, Money, and Competition.

Dawn showed her deep love for children and concern for the way these powers and principalities are forming their lives today. Speaking specifically to the principality and



Bishop Al Gwinn (left) and Dr. Marva Dawn responded to clergy questions.

power of Technology, she identified television and the Internet as training children today to be passive, greedy, sexually immoral, violent, and judgmental. "These are things I don't want my children to grow up in," she said.

Comparing the number of hours children spend with TV and religious education, one can see what is forming them, she said.

"They get one and a half hours of training: one hour of UMYF, 15 minutes of devotion, and 30 minutes of Bible study resulting in seven hours a week of religious education (if we are lucky) versus the 35 or 40 hours on the web. These technological tools are forming our children instead of faith," said Dawn.

Principalities and powers left unchecked and kept in their proper vocation create much of the division faced today, she said. Dawn went on to say that "Competition and accusation [are] the ways the powers work. We [the church] don't have time to compete. We need to be doing the work of mission."

The keynote was followed by a meal that included Bishop Gwinn moderating a Q&A session with Dawn. Among many issues facing clergy and the church today, she stressed the importance of Sabbath.

"Part of our deepest resistance [to Sabbath] is from our lack of desire to know that we are weak. It is a combination of our own insecurities and pride. Our pride that we are needed like a messiah; our insecurity that the congregation can get along without us for one day. You will be much more attuned to [your congregation] if you have a day away from them," she said.

Responding to Bishop Gwinn's question as to what last thing she would say to those gathered, Dawn laughed with joy and said, "Yes! Preach the gospel, because it's true! It is the eyewitness testimony that Jesus is risen – and that changes everything!"

The design team for the gathering included the Revs. Anne Ahl, Jonathan Jeffries, LuAnn Charlton, Kelli Walker Jones, Albert Shuler, Bill Snotherly, and Paul Stallsworth.

\* Bob Bergland is senior pastor of First UMC in Rocky Mount and Order of Elders' chair.



Jacob Canady

## Jacob Canady receives Good Samaritan Award

Jacob Canady, an Eagle Scout from Asbury UMC in Washington, has been given the Good Samaritan Award from the United Methodist Men's Scouting Ministry.

The son of Nanette and Merton Canady, Jacob oversees the outreach ministry making video and audio recordings of worship for distribution to shut-ins and others who are unable to attend services. He has also received the Hackney Award and has served as Asbury's youth fellowship president for three years.

The Good Samaritan Award recognizes youth, ages 12-21, who demonstrate the attributes of a Good Samaritan as described in Luke 10:25-37 in ministry to others through outreach, humanitarian assistance or advocacy.

## letters to the EDITOR

### Threshold Program Seeks Volunteers

Dear Friends,

I am a United Methodist Chaplain serving in the Federal Prison in Butner near the Raleigh-Durham area. We are searching for ministry volunteers for "Threshold," a faith-based prisoner re-entry program preparing inmates to successfully return to society and not return to prison.

This spiritual growth program was developed for Federal Bureau of Prisons inmates. Inmates meet in groups of 12-14 for one hour weekly for a total of six months. Participants follow a "pathway" that strengthens their spiritual understanding and growth. The program is unique in that it encourages participants to address major life issues from the perspective of their own religious tradition. Volunteers must be open to this without trying to make "converts" out of the inmates. Individuals not connected with any religious tradition are also welcome to participate from a personal values-based perspective.

The programs make a significant difference in inmates' lives, the lives of children and families, and the life of the communities across America where former inmates will call home. Please consider this opportunity. Full training is provided for all volunteers. Feel free to contact me with any questions you have about the program. A background check is required and must be cleared to enter the federal prison. All information is kept strictly confidential and securely on file.

Chaplain William Hoyle, FCI 1 Medium - Butner  
P.O. Box 1000, Butner, NC 27509  
(919) 575-4541 Ext. 4300 or email [whoyle@bop.gov](mailto:whoyle@bop.gov)

## 1K for 1Kid campaign from page 1

takes \$1000 to support a child for one year through Methodist Home for Children. MHC cares for close to 1,400 children a year through the agency's varied programs.

## Hymnal from page 5

better sense of both the ability of the Publishing House to invest at least \$2 million in the revision's development and the ability of congregations to purchase new hymnals.

Work has not moved ahead because economic conditions have not improved. The development of a new hymnal cannot be completed in time for the 2012 General Conference.

Eventual sales of a revised hymnal would likely recover the investment, but sufficient funding is not now available.

The General Board of Discipleship and the Publishing House plan to collaborate on special projects and resources for the church's liturgical life and music ministries.

The \$1000 bridges the gap between the true cost of care and the dollars MHC receives for services from partner agencies in social service, mental health, and juvenile justice.

Last year, in better economic times, the campaign raised \$62,000. This year, the campaign has raised \$22,325 throughout the district with more activity in the works. At the Sunday kick-off, donors raised over \$14,000, for which MHC is deeply grateful.

"Now, more than ever we are relying on the committed and faithful generosity of donors who understand and support the crucial work we do in the lives of children, youth, and families throughout the state of North Carolina, in your county and in mine," said the Rev. Bruce E. Stanley, MHC president/CEO.

District, local church or groups interested in participating in "1K for 1Kid" may contact Jennifer Cooper at MHC, [jcooper@mhfc.org](mailto:jcooper@mhfc.org) or 888.305.4321 ext. 305.



# United Methodist bishops vote to take a cut in salary

By Linda Green \*

In a sign of solidarity with people and churches struggling in the global economic crisis, the 50 active bishops from the United States voted to forgo a pay raise for 2010 and instead roll back their salaries to 2008 levels. Their annual pay would drop from \$125,658 to \$120,942 beginning Jan. 1.

"The current global crisis has... gifted us with a sense of urgency and an opportunity to lead courageously," the bishops said in a call to action at their spring meeting.

The bishops said they did not know if their action would have a snowball effect because other salaries are related to the bishops' wages.

The bishops said they had an obligation to be leaders in sacrificial giving in response to the crisis.

This time in history, the bishops said, "demands bold, courageous, transformative action."

Western NC Bishop Larry Goodpaster, the council's president-designate, said the call to action is a way to name the urgency of the moment, an urgency that "calls us not to panic, not to fear, but for confident action into the future."

Some regional and local church leaders have already taken salary cuts to help with deficits and to keep ministries going, several bishops said.

To save money, the Council of Bishops voted to shorten their semi-annual meeting by a day, from five to four days.

It was reported that the 2008 General Conference was \$1.5 million over budget and the projected shortfall for the 2012 conference would be more than \$3 million. The bishops will work with the Commission on General Conference and the UM Council on Finance and Administration to redesign the gathering.

The United Methodist Church approved a \$75 million Global Health initiative and an additional

\$25 million challenge goal at 2008 General Conference to help end malaria. The bishops committed to helping the church reach its goal by 2012. All active and retired bishops will make a voluntary contribution to the initiative.

The bishops also committed to help the Central Conference Pension Initiative raise the remaining \$5 million of the pension initiative's \$20 million goal to support pension programs for retired pastors and surviving spouses in Africa, the Philippines and Europe.

The bishops said this is a "kairos moment in time" and they have not lost their heart of passion to be servant leaders for the church.

\* Linda Green is a UM News Service news writer based in Nashville, Tenn



United Methodist Bishops Benjamin Boni of Côte d'Ivoire (left) and Mary Virginia Taylor of South Carolina (center) listen to discussion about a rollback for salaries of active U.S. bishops to 2008 levels. (Photo by Linda Green / UMNS)

## METHODIST UNIVERSITY

### Students aid humanitarian issues

Students in Economics Anonymous, a student organization established in 2008 at Methodist University in Fayetteville, are fundraising this spring to aid Palestinian refugees supported by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

The students are concentrating their efforts on raising money to help refugees in the Gaza Strip, which is a coastal strip of land that borders Egypt and Israel.

The United Nations created UNRWA in 1949, and its sole purpose is to improve the living conditions of refugees who are in need due to the Arab-Israeli conflicts.

"It is exciting and moving to see students committed to responding to the needs of others," said Dr. Elton Hendricks, president of Methodist University. "The Gaza region is a particularly distressed area. Economics Anonymous is helping all of us to realize what needs to be done and what can be done. I am proud of them."

"Humanitarian aid for Gaza is significantly important at this point of time," said Anas Iqtait, a member of the group. "Since thousands of people are in need of food, water, and other basic necessities,

we have decided to help."

"Though our club is young, we have accomplished a lot in a short time," said Karen Reid, faculty advisor of the club. "This new endeavor is—by far—the most ambitious and exciting. It provides our students and the community an opportunity to learn about issues they may not have been aware of and to help others in need."

The group is open to people of all backgrounds and majors who have an interest in economics or helping people. The club currently has 18 members from Bosnia, Columbia, Eritrea, France, Nepal, Palestine, Zimbabwe, and the United States. The Gaza project is the first of the club's endeavors to raise awareness and funds for a variety of humanitarian issues around the world.

"Our project in the fall of 2009 will be about the child soldiers of Uganda," said Reid. "The presentation will include the documentary, Invisible Children, and we hope that the film makers will be present for the showing." The group is also researching a North Carolina-based project for next year.

For more information, contact Karen Reid at (910) 630-7078 or e-mail kreid@methodist.edu.

## UM agencies cope with downturn in economy

By Kathy Gilbert \*

Amid the economic downturn, top executives of The United Methodist Church's agencies report they are starting new ministries to serve youth and the poor even as they make painful cuts in wages and staff to meet budget shortfalls.

Top executives of the church's 13 general agencies told a joint meeting of the Council on Finance and Administration and the Connectional Table that the economic downturn has not meant an end to new programs.

The Board of Discipleship is moving ahead with plans to start new churches and to hold a global event for young people in Germany in 2011, the Rev. Karen Greenwaldt said.

Erin Hawkins of the Commission on Religion and Race cited James 1:2-3: "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance."

UM Communications reported on the denomination's recently launched "Rethink Church" campaign (see page 12) designed to raise awareness of how the church makes a difference in the world. The Rev. Larry Hollon, top executive of the communications agency, also reported a \$700,000 shortfall projected for 2010. The agency is limiting travel and spending.

Other agencies are also making decisions to cut costs:

- ♦ The Commission on the Status and Role of Women is considering salary cuts and may cancel an International Women's Congress.
- ♦ The Board of Higher Education and Ministry canceled its 2010 spring meeting and may cancel other events.
- ♦ The Board of Church & Society and the Commission on Religion & Race are sharing human resource and financial personnel at a \$100,000 savings for both agencies.
- ♦ For the first time in 50 years, the UM Publishing House will

not distribute \$1 million in "Cokesbury" checks to annual conferences for retired clergy. The publishing house, which does not receive general church funds, has experienced an \$8.5 million to \$9 million revenue shortfall.

- ♦ The Board of Global Ministries has dealt with a \$4 million reduction. An independent auditor made 220 recommendations on cutting expenses including eliminating 41 positions and not filling 20 open positions.

\* Kathy Gilbert is a news writer for UM News Service in Nashville, Tenn.

### From the EDITOR

Printing of the July issue of the NCC Christian Advocate will be delayed approximately one week in order to include news of the 2009 Annual Conference in Greenville June 10-13.

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# NCC builds

continued from page 1

approximately 33,500 square feet overall and will include space for lease to three tenants.

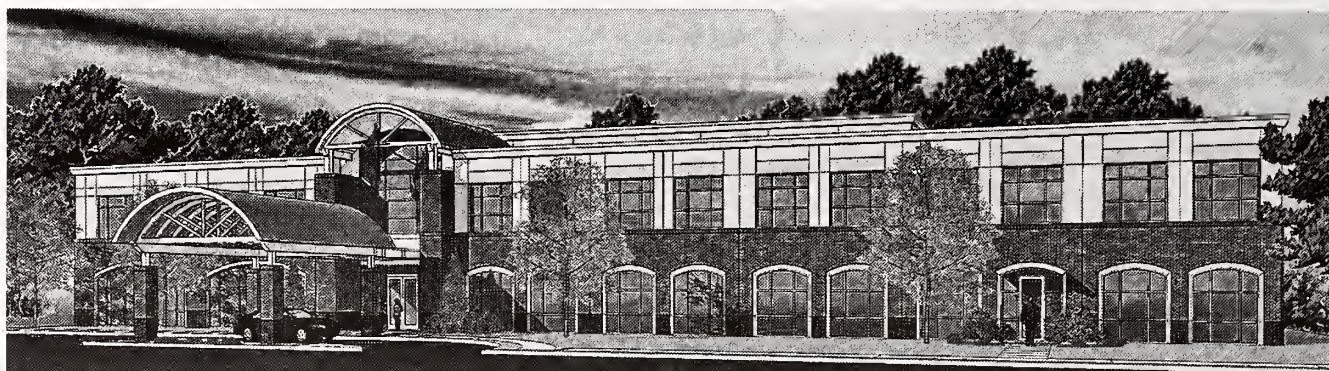
The floor plans feature a large meeting/training room on the first floor. Other smaller conference rooms will be available but the large meeting room is being designed to hold a meeting with up to 175 participants. This room will allow for larger training events than have been previously available.

The construction site and building permit applications were filed with the Town of Garner in May and the site permit has been approved. The building construction permit is expected to be approved in ample time to begin construction on schedule. The design and overall project progress is on schedule with an anticipated building completion date in April 2010.

The building design process has included discussions of ways to build that will make the new facility environmentally friendly. Decisions based on these discussions have placed this facility in a good position to earn Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification as a green building from the U.S. Green Building Council.

Some of the decisions made leading to this position include building positioning on the lot, use of recycled materials and recycling building waste, energy efficient windows, landscape irrigation, and much more.

The application for LEED certification will be prepared during the building construction and, upon favorable vote by the US GBC, will be awarded after facility construction has been completed. The NC Conference will be among the first in the conference area to attain this certification and



The overall project is on schedule and anticipated to be completed in spring of 2010 before lease options on the current facility, which was sold in 2008, expire during 2010. The downturn in the economy has benefited the Conference because bids for materials and labor have been lower than expected. Conference Trustees have discussed how deeply the NC Conference is blessed to be able to provide opportunities for employment and sales that would otherwise have been unavailable.

will lead by example in demonstrating careful stewardship of the many blessings given us, including the environment.

The 2008 session of the NC Annual Conference approved the sale of the United Methodist Building and the land upon which it sits as well as the adjoining Wade Avenue property holding the apartments owned by Raleigh Townhomes, Inc.

In August 2008, the UM Building and Glenwood Avenue property were sold, and the building was leased back for up to 18 months while the new building is being constructed. The due diligence period for the Wade Avenue property began just after the closing of the first property and the sale of the second tract was due to close in February 2010.

During this due diligence period on the Wade Avenue property, issues arose and the renegotiated terms of the purchase contract were not beneficial to the NC Conference. The Conference Board of Trustees would not agree to terms that were not favorable to the NC Conference and the purchase contract expired. The result of this is that a listing agreement has been signed and the property is now on the market for sale.

The Conference Board of Trustees has been in consultation throughout this ongoing process and voted to give authority to the Executive Committee to proceed with listing the property for sale during a conference call on March 16. The Conference Board of Trustees will consider carefully any offers received through this listing process and will update the Annual Conference as progress is made throughout this process.

For updated information on the progress of the project, visit the NCC Builds website at [www.nccumc.org/treasurer/ncc-builds](http://www.nccumc.org/treasurer/ncc-builds). Beginning with the first progress picture from May 8, there will be weekly updates

on the project and a photo gallery. Comments on the project are also welcome to be emailed to [nccbuilds@nccumc.org](mailto:nccbuilds@nccumc.org) and are forwarded to the Conference Design Team and Board of Trustees for consideration. An update of building progress will also

be provided as part of the Conference Board of Trustees report to the 2009 Annual Conference.

*\* Christine Dodson is conference treasurer and is treasurer of the Conference Board of Trustees.*

## Why build now?

At a recent meeting of the Conference Connectional Table, Board of Trustees President Cashar Evans provided an update of the progress on the construction of the new conference facility in Garner. One of the main issues addressed included explanation of the timing of the construction. Evans explained that he has been asked why the Annual Conference would be planning for a new facility in the midst of the current economic crisis.

The first reason cited, and possibly the most important, is the fact that the current facility has been sold.

The sale of the current United Methodist Building and the Glenwood Avenue property on which it sits was approved by the 2008 Annual Conference. This sale was to take place in two stages with the building parcel to be closed first. This has occurred and the proceeds of that sale are in hand. The sale included a provision to lease back the building for up to 18 months while the new facility was under construction.

"Therefore, plans and completion of a new facility are imperative because the current lease options will expire during 2010," Evans said.

Another reason for continuation of the project is that the current state of the economy has resulted in bids for materials and labor coming in at amounts less than anticipated.

The Rev. Carol Dean, pastor of Plank Chapel UMC and member of the Conference Connectional Table, said her previous experience in the construction industry has shown that "economic conditions such as these benefit the ones building because of forced competition in the building market. You generally see lower labor and materials bids as providers compete for the work available," she said.

Evans, during his report, said that this general rule cited by Dean does seem to apply in this project because the building development consultant working with the Trustees has advised that the bids coming in for subcontractor work have been favorable to the Conference.

Concluding his report, Evans expressed the gratitude to God felt by the Conference Trustees for the opportunity to begin this project during this economic situation. The Trustees have discussed how deeply the NC Conference is blessed to be able to provide opportunities for employment and sales that would otherwise have been unavailable.

Evans said "any time we are able to provide positive encouragement to others from a business perspective or not, through providing work or by other means, we are showing others the abundant blessings and hope available to all through our Lord Jesus Christ."

### Let's Journey To....

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# Annual Conference 2009

Resources for lay and clergy members of the North Carolina Annual Conference

Pages 9-12



## Learning Together: Workshops offered Thurs., June 11, open to AC members and guests

Workshops for lay and clergy members and guests of the North Carolina Annual Conference will be offered on timely topics for the church and the fruitful practices of congregations.

Using the theme of the Conference, "A Future with Hope: Learning Together" the workshops provide learning opportunities and conversations with practitioners of the faith.

Five workshops will be held Thursday evening, June 11, 7:30-9:30p.m. In addition, on Friday, June 12, Adam Hamilton will lead three teaching sessions in the Convention Center (see article on left).

For the Thursday sessions, the main Conference room will be subdivided into three classrooms.

The other two Thursday workshops will be in meeting rooms on the Hilton's first floor.

All of the sessions on Thursday and Friday are open to guests as well as members of the Annual Conference.

Registration is not required, but seating will be limited in some of the rooms. Each workshop is 90 minutes.

♦ **Reaching and Transforming the Lives of a New Generation**

Convention Center Section D-E  
Leading this workshop will be led the Rev. Marty Cauley. A major

emphasis of the workshop will be "How do Conference churches reach the 17-27 year olds who are seeking spiritual experiences and authentic relationships, but who do not look for these in the institutional church?" The comments of young people on faith and the church will be the springboard for the discussion. Leaders will provide strategies for reaching and transforming the lives of this age group.

♦ **Where Does that Conference Money Go?**

Convention Center Section A-B  
Emily Innes, conference lay leader, and Christine Dodson, conference treasurer, will offer concise information about the mission giving and what it accomplishes in the name of Jesus Christ in our communities and around the world.

♦ **Mission: Possible, Transforming Existing Congregations**

Convention Center Section C  
The Rev. Dr. Reggie Ponder will be the leader. Discussions will address: "What benchmarks signal congregational vitality?" and "How can a congregation embrace its mission and build a community of believers?" A pastor and members of a congregation will tell you what it takes.

♦ **Web Presence, Web Schmesence: Why Do I Need One of Those?**

Hilton Ballroom B  
Peer into the depths of web design/development with Derek Leek, conference web ministries producer, and Douglas Ward, conference Information Technology director, as they show how to create, and manage, an effective web presence. Come and learn which options are available for local churches in the conference, as well as a little about how the Conference manages its website, [nccumc.org](http://nccumc.org).

♦ **Skills for Healthy Storming: How to Navigate Safely through Conflict**

Hilton Ballroom A  
Conflict in all our relationships is natural, inevitable, and actually essential to our life and ministry together. In fact, the conflict is not what harms us, but how we respond to conflict can. This workshop will provide essential biblical skills to navigate safely and effectively through the "storms" in our relationships at home, at work and even in our church. Instructor: Beth Crissman, Shepherd of the Vision (executive director) Plowpoint, Inc.



Adam Hamilton

### Hamilton to lead teaching sessions Friday

The Rev. Adam Hamilton, founding pastor of the Church of the Resurrection, will present three teaching session on Friday June 12 and the NC Annual Conference meeting at the Greenville Convention Center.

He have two teaching sessions, Friday afternoon and one in the evening. "Leading Beyond the Walls: Lessons in Leadership, Worship, Preaching and Evangelism" is the overall title for the sessions.

The topic of his first Friday afternoon session is "What Leaders Do and Why." The second afternoon session is "Effective Worship and Preaching." The Friday evening topic is "Evangelism and the Case for Methodism."

Each session is open to conference members and guests.

Kelly Sisney, a comedian at Church of the Resurrection, will perform two five minute stand-up routines at the beginning of the second and third talks by Hamilton on Friday.

The first will poke fun at Church of the Resurrection and the second will be a humorous look at being a United Methodist.

### Church Mice

Karl Zorowski





## Taizé service to follow Friday evening session

A service of worship in the style of the Taizé community will be offered following Adam Hamilton's teaching session on Friday night, June 12 at Annual Conference in Greenville. The service is open to conference members and guests.

Taizé worship features a calming, contemplative atmosphere created by group singing, lit candles, and the use of visual icons. The distinctive Taizé style of singing consists of short melodies sung repetitively as long as the worshippers and the Spirit desire.

Prayer stations and prayer teams will also be available for healing prayer during this evening service. The Taizé service will be held in Ballroom B, the same room in which early morning Eucharist will be offered.

## Three offerings planned to support selected ministries of the NC Annual Conference

Three offerings will be received during the 2009 Annual Conference session. Lay and clergy members of the conference will be given the opportunity to contribute to these selected ministries:

### MERCI

The first offering, taken Wednesday afternoon, June 10, during the opening Service of Holy Communion, will be for MERCI, the NC Conference ministry of disaster response and recovery.

The MERCI Center, located in Goldsboro, provides training for early response volunteers and, in conjunction with UMVIM (United Methodist Volunteers in Mission), for team leaders responding to natural disasters.

The warehouses at the center are used to store flood buckets and health kits and other supplies that are needed in the aftermath of a storm, tornado, or other natural disaster. Tarps, tools, building materials and cleaning supplies are available for distribution.

Teams are deployed to the places

of need with the administration provided by the staff at MERCI.

Supplies awaiting shipment overseas or beyond the Conference also are stored and packed at the center by volunteers to deliver humanitarian aid to victims of famine, war and displacement.

The offering assures that the hands and feet of Jesus will be in places where losses are heavy and the need for help and hope are critical.

### Wil Bailey and Costa Rica Mission Project

This offering, taken before the close of business Thursday afternoon, will support Wil Bailey and the Costa Rica Mission Project.

After completing his Master of Divinity degree at Duke University, Bailey's call to ministry was confirmed and blessed by the NC Conference Board of Missions, as they recognized his call and giftedness for the mission field.

He became the first of the NC Missionaries, as an Individual Mission Volunteer (not deployed by the Gen-

eral Board of Global Ministries), with support of the Conference Advance and the Rocky Mount District.

The mission provides for all kinds of kingdom work in the Costa Rica Methodist Church.

Bishop Al Gwinn said of the mission, following a recent visit, "It is in so many ways, 'New Testament' like! There is the breaking of bread, fellowship, prayer, Bible study and new believers are being added to the church daily."

### Ministry of the Laity

The final offering, to be received on Friday evening during the presentation of the Rev. Adam Hamilton, will support the ministry of the laity in the NC Conference. The funds will be administered by the Conference Board of Laity for their work in advocacy, training and involvement in ministries as lay members of The United Methodist Church.

These opportunities for giving sustain many worthy ministries and strengthen participants' involvement in the work of the Body of Christ.

## IT'S A PIG PICKIN'

Wednesday • June 10th • 5:30-7:30 p.m.  
Cypress Glen Retirement Community  
100 Hickory Street • Greenville, N.C.

Meet the Directors!  
MAP AND DETAILS ON BACK

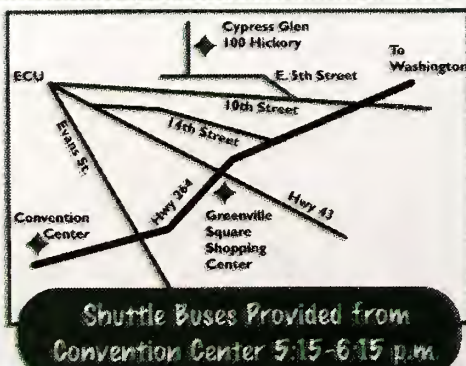
The Communities of The United Methodist Retirement Homes:  
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Wesley Pines (Lumberton) • Wesley Ridge (Lumberton)  
Quail Haven Village (Pinehurst)

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RSVP by May 30: (919) 384-3005 or 3006

## Welcome Delegates & Friends!

### Instructions from the Convention Center:

1. Take Highway 264 East.
  2. You will cross over Evans Street, Highway 43 and 14th Street.
  3. Turn left at 10th Street. Go about two blocks and bear to the right onto 5th Street. Note: This street can be easily missed.
  4. Keep on 5th Street until you see Hickory Street. There is a highway sign for Cypress Glen in front of Coats Wahl School.
  5. Turn Right onto Hickory Street and you are there.
- Takes about 12 minutes from the Convention Center.



## Special meals at '09 conference

### June 10, 2009

#### UM Retirement Homes

It's a Pig Pickin'  
5:30 pm – 7:30 pm  
No Charge – Open to all  
Clergy and Lay Members  
to Annual Conference  
RSVP by May 30

#### Evangelical Fellowship

12:00 Noon  
Covenant UMC, Greenville  
Register by emailing  
donshields@nccumc.org

#### Clergywomen's Dinner

5:30 pm  
Hilton Greenville  
Contact: Para Drake  
paradrake@gmail.com

### June 11, 2009

#### Retiree Luncheon

12:00 Noon  
Hilton Greenville

#### BMCR Luncheon

12:00 noon  
Golden Corral

### June 11 continued

#### Methodist University Dinner for Alumni, Ministers and Friends

5:30 pm at St. James UMC  
\$10 Tickets must be purchased in advance  
Contact Michaela Brown  
at (800) 488-7110 ext. 7169  
Transportation is available

### June 12, 2009

#### Clergy Partners

11:30 am Registration  
12:00 noon Buffet Luncheon  
City Hotel & Bistro  
Registration by 5/30 required

#### Methodist Federation for Social Action

12:00 noon  
Cost: \$12.00 per person  
Guest Speaker: Sam Dixon,  
Director, UMCOR  
The Beef Barn  
Contact: Henry Jarrett  
919.606.5674 or jarretth@bellsouth.net



**Greenville Hilton**

A Thursday: 7:30pm Skills for Healthy Storming  
B Thurs-Sat: 7:30am Early Morning Communion  
Thursday 7:30pm Web Presence, Web Schmesence  
Friday: 9:00pm Taizé Service

C Overflow to view Annual Conference  
E-F Cokesbury Bookstore  
★ Olan Mills Photography

**Convention Center**

**Convention Center**

**Opening Executive Sessions:**  
Laity meeting in full convention center space (A-E)  
Clergy meeting at Covenant UMC, Winterville

**Workshops:**  
A-B Thursday: 7:30pm "Where Does that Conference Money Go?"  
C Thursday: 7:30pm "Mission: Possible, Transforming Existing Congregations"  
D-E Thursday: 7:30pm "Reaching & Transforming the Lives of a New Generation"  
Full Convention Center:  
Friday: 1:30pm, 3:15pm, 7:30pm  
Presentations by Adam Hamilton

Note: Details on Workshops listed on Page 9. All Workshops are open to guests as well as members of Annual Conference.

## Frequently asked questions about the budget for 2010

Two budgets will be before the 2009 North Carolina Annual Conference. One will be the budget to be spent in 2010 and the other for the budget to be spent in 2011. Conference budgets are approved one year, raised the next and spent the third year.

The budget to be spent in 2010 was originally approved in 2008. This year, it will be presented to the conference with a recommendation from the Conference Connectional Table and the Conference Council on Finance and Administration to make reductions in response to the economic impact being felt by local churches. The complete budgets to be spent in 2010 and 2011 are on the pages 56-57 of the Conference Workbook and on the Web at <http://nccumc.org/secretary/files/cfa.pdf>. The tables and bullet points below provide information on the recommended changes for the budget to be spent in 2010.

- ◆ Total requested for revised 2010 budget being presented to 2009 annual conference = \$19,767,854
- ◆ 2010 budget approved during 2008 = \$20,135,263
- ◆ Revised budget for 2010 reduced by \$367,409 – specific line item changes are shown in the table on the right, "2010 Budget Line Item Changes"
- ◆ 2010 budget is currently being raised in 2009
- ◆ If passed, 2009 apportionments would be recalculated and a credit would be applied to churches whose amounts change
- ◆ Churches capped by 15% from 2008 would not have a credit unless the change dropped them below the 15% limit
- ◆ Credit notices will be mailed with 2010 apportionment calculation mailing in July 2009
- ◆ Requested 2011 budget also being presented for approval – total = \$20,396,583
- ◆ 2011 budget is a 3.18% increase over the revised, reduced 2010 budget
- ◆ 2011 budget is a 1.3% increase over the original approved 2010 budget
- ◆ Budgets are presented Wednesday afternoon – voted on Saturday morning

### 2010 Budget Line Item Changes

Line	Description	2010 Approved	2010 Revised	Difference
9	Missions & Outreach	\$525,600	\$459,600	-\$66,000
10	Refugee & Immigration	\$0	\$11,000	\$11,000
17	Spiritual Life	\$0	\$6,500	\$6,500
20	Campus Ministry	\$488,964	\$475,000	-\$13,964
21	Youth Ministry	\$60,300	\$54,270	-\$6,030
22	Young Adults	\$0	\$4,050	\$4,050
23	Children's Ministry	\$19,450	\$17,505	-\$1,945
24	Older Adults	\$0	\$6,000	\$6,000
25	Education & Nurture	\$12,300	\$2,250	-\$10,050
27	Emerging Church Support	\$717,523	\$618,863	-\$98,660
30	Archives and History	\$7,650	\$6,885	-\$765
35	Hispanic/Latino Ministries	\$16,300	\$12,700	-\$3,600
39	Sexual Ethics Salary/Benefits	\$52,000	\$0	-\$52,000
43	Board of Laity	\$24,700	\$27,400	\$2,700
45	Clergy Counseling Salary/Benefits	\$134,645	\$0	-\$134,645
64	Conference Journal/Printing	\$40,000	\$30,000	-\$10,000
Total Reduction				-\$367,409

### Informed, Connected, Inspired

A copy of the May issue of the *Advocate* with the 32 amendments to the constitution of The United Methodist Church was placed in registration material for clergy and lay members of the Annual Conference. Also included with the amendments was a rationale and pros and cons for each amendment. A copy of the issue was also provided to participants at the three Annual Conference briefing sessions. The *Advocate* is pleased to provide these issues as a way to reduce the printing costs of the conference.

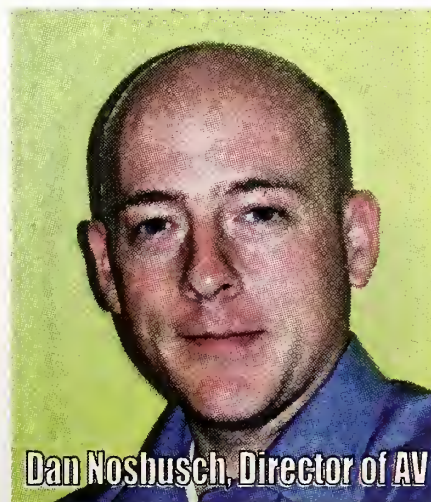
Each lay member of the conference, whether a current subscriber or not, will receive a copy of the July *Advocate* which will contain a wrap-up of the 2009 Annual Conference.



If you are not a subscriber to the *Advocate*, we hope you will consider becoming one today. A subscription form is available on page 14.

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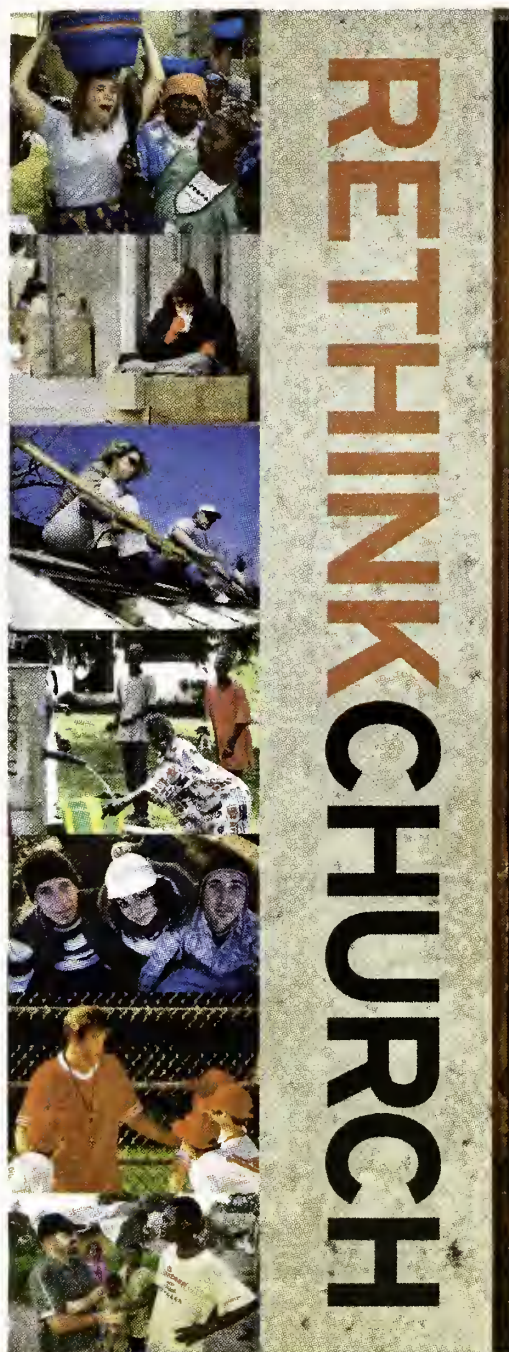


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## Rethink Church: Redefining the church experience beyond church doors

As the next evolution of the The United Methodist Church's "Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors" welcoming and advertising campaign, Rethink Church seeks to redefine the church experience beyond the church doors and invite people to become engaged in the world. The campaign will raise awareness of The United Methodist Church by posing the rhetorical question, "What if church were a verb?"

"We hope Rethink Church will cause people inside the Church to reassess what it means to be people of faith," said the Rev. Larry Hollon, chief executive of UM Communications. "This campaign is an invitation to a revolutionary conversation about what it means to be people in mission. It's more than rethinking. It's a radical return to understanding what the Gospel is for us in our day."

United Methodists can find resources for Rethink Church at [www.rethinkchurch.org](http://www.rethinkchurch.org). The site offers congregations resources for getting started, downloadable tools, such as videos and graphics, and training opportunities in the areas of welcoming, connecting, and identifying. A lectionary resource provides thematic ideas and Scripture verses to use in exploring those themes.

### What if church was verb?

Jesus gave the Great Commission, and told his followers to "Go into the world" doing the things that he did: teaching, healing, feeding hungry people, speaking out about injustice, and calling the world to more faithful living.

Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to empower the disciples to begin a movement. The early Christians did not see themselves as "church." Until Paul and Peter agreed upon a division of labor, one attending to Jewish followers of Jesus and the other taking the gospel to the Gentiles, the followers of Jesus spoke of themselves as the people of "the way."

In many places, the Church has lost the sense of being a movement and gathered in buildings wait-

ing for people to come. Jesus sent the disciples, and sends Christians today, out to meet the world. That is accomplished by encountering the world at its points of greatest need.

The term Rethink Church is using for these touch points is "doors." Jesus consistently used a door as a metaphor to present opportunities to engage and invite his listeners to be part of the building of God's kingdom here on earth.

"The United Methodist Church wants people to begin thinking of church as an active verb; people taking action to better the lives of others. While ministries vary from church to church, United Methodist churches offer thousands of services and opportunities in the United States and abroad," said Bishop Gregory Palmer, president of the Council of Bishops.

### Theological foundations

RETHINK CHURCH is not a call to find a new theology, nor to move away from a commitment to scripture, nor to distance the Church from Wesleyan traditions. It is a call to refocus the ecclesiology, to ask the question, "What has God called The United Methodist Church to be in the 21st century?" To see church in a way that is more aligned to scripture, and to be more faithful to the tradition of John Wesley who believed the world was his parish.

The hope of the RETHINK CHURCH campaign is about challenging a movement of people empowered to take ministry into the world, sparking a global conversation about what it means to live as a person of faith, a disciple of Jesus Christ, in the 21st century. If the campaign is successful, it will be the catalyst for a return to understanding of what the gospel means to United Methodists today.

It is asking the people of The United Methodist Church to see their local church in a much broader way: not tied solely to their worship on Sunday morning but in all the ways, locally and globally, they are making a difference in people's lives.

## Crucial to update Find-A-Church information online

Since its launch, more users have accessed the Find-a-Church feature of [www.10thousanddoors.org](http://www.10thousanddoors.org) than any other section. "Find-a-Church is where people come to us, seeking out opportunities within our churches," said Larry Hollon of UM Communications. "But they'll never know what those opportunities are if they aren't listed."

Even churches with Web sites should keep their profiles updated, as it is a tool for directing people to the church's Web site. Hollon likens Find-a-Church profiles to a virtual "welcome mat" for United Methodist churches.

Visit [www.find-a-church.org](http://www.find-a-church.org) or call 1-800-251-8140 to update entries.

## Focused on young adults seeking to connect

"We aim to reach young adults who are not familiar with church, who are concerned about the world in which we live, who want to make their lives more meaningful, and who have a deep yearning to connect with God and with a community of support," said the Rev. Larry Hollon, chief executive of UM Communications. "We also hope to reach people inside the church who will reassess what it means to be people of faith."

New research conducted by The Barna Group on behalf of United Methodist Communications found that 66 percent of young adults surveyed were searching for meaning and purpose in their lives and 62 percent considered themselves "spiritual."

Two in three said there were specific events or times in their lives when they were more likely to search for spiritual answers. But 78 percent said they never attend church, or only attend once in a while. The Rethink Church campaign aims to bridge that gap. "We want to provide the invitation for people to make that kind of connection within The United Methodist Church."

### 10thousanddoors.org

More than 40 United Methodist bishops from around the world marked the Rethink Church launch in May by visiting day laborers at three sites around Washing-

ton, D.C., during the Council of Bishops meeting. The bishops served breakfast to the laborers, and offered conversation and prayer.

United Methodists also took to the streets of New York to perform random acts of kindness. The street teams gave away cards promoting [www.10thousanddoors.org](http://www.10thousanddoors.org), a new Web site where the church is directing persons via Rethink Church advertising. The site encourages exploration of the diverse ways United Methodists are making a difference in the world, and invites participation, discussion, and action.

"We are saying that there are 10,000 ways to become engaged with the church," said Hollon. "Whether it's helping to provide an anti-malaria bed net for a child in Africa, volunteering to help in the community, or joining a church's recreation league, we want you to feel welcome. There is a doorway through which you can approach The United Methodist Church."

Through [www.10thousanddoors.org](http://www.10thousanddoors.org), visitors have the opportunity to explore church as a 365-day active experience, revealing the myriad paths that lead seekers into spiritual interaction and faith discovery.





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## Mission board approves \$1.3 million in scholarships

(UMNS)—More than \$1.3 million in scholarships for advanced and college-level study in the 2009-2010 academic year were approved this spring by directors of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries. The stipends will help to support the educational preparation of students whose future work will directly relate to the mission of The United Methodist Church.

A total of \$649,463 was granted through the World Communion Scholarship program, \$462,263 to 45 international students and \$187,200 to 23 students in the United States. The funds come primarily through the World Communion Special Sunday offering.

A total of \$627,358 was awarded in International Leadership Development Grants to 52 new and 74 continuing students. These funds, supporting bachelor- through doctoral-level studies, come from designated endowments and the general funds of Global Ministries.

Another \$71,500 was awarded in National Leadership Development grants, assisting 18 continuing students from racial and ethnic communities.

## Darfur students offered Africa University scholarships

(UMNS)—Darfur Peace & Development Organization and Africa University are working together to provide scholarships for two Darfur students to attend United Methodist-related Africa University in Mutare, Zimbabwe.

The organization provides humanitarian and development assistance to the victims of conflict in Darfur, Sudan, without regard to ethnicity, gender, age or religious beliefs. It works to foster reconciliation, to facilitate just governance and to enable Darfurians to rebuild their homeland in effective, sustainable ways. Learn more at [darfurpeace.org](http://darfurpeace.org).

The scholarships will be awarded to graduated high school students in Darfur interested in pursuing a career in the fields of public service or community development.



## Demand for UM scholarships and loans skyrockets

By Vicki Brown \*

More than twice as many college students applied for United Methodist scholarships this year as last year, and student loan requests poured in so quickly that the application site was closed in four days.

The economy is one factor, but online applications and the "Five for Five" loan program probably were big factors in the increase, too, said Angella Current-Felder, executive director of the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry's Office of Loans and Scholarships.

"Online applications make the scholarships and loans much more accessible when you are working with a generation that lives online," Current-Felder said. Scholarship applications went online in January.

Scholarship application deadlines vary, but as of May 15, the last dead-

line, 8,892 applications had been received, compared to 3,675 the previous year. In 2008, 3,365 students were awarded about \$4.6 million in scholarships.

"We have more applications for both loans and scholarships than we have funds," Current-Felder said. And fewer funds are available because of the economy.

"We suffered about a 20 percent loss in investments. For instance, we have one fund that had \$7 million, and now it has \$5.5 million," she said.

United Methodist scholarship funds come from three church-wide Special Sundays with offerings: Student Day, World Communion Sunday, and Native American Ministries Sunday, as well as earnings on funds that are invested and managed by the board's Investment Committee. Many of those funds are from wills and annuities.

Loan funds come from Student

Day offerings and from loan repayments.

The Student Day offering was down slightly in 2008, \$468,943, compared to \$554,242 the previous year. Ten percent of those funds go to loans. The rest fund scholarships.

"The good news is that right now, it looks as if our collections are holding. We projected \$2 million in collections, and it appears we will get that," Current-Felder said. "We award loans with what we collect."

The demand for loans increased dramatically in 2007 with the "Five for Five" program that doubled the amount students could borrow from \$2,500 to \$5,000 annually and dropped the interest rate to 5 percent. Demand increased again when online applications were started in May 2008.

Last May, applications for loans for the summer and fall terms closed in just three weeks. In December, appli-

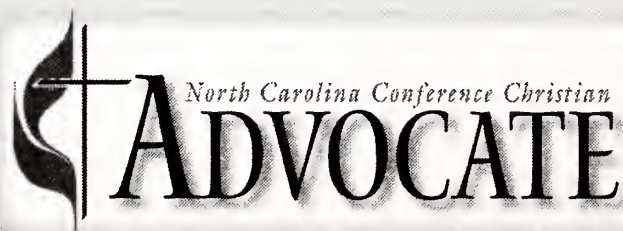
cations were closed after just three days.

Loan applications for summer and fall 2009 semesters opened May 1, and closed in just four days after 299 applications were received for about \$1.5 million.

In 2008, 412 loans were awarded for \$1.86 million. For 2009, 119 loans were awarded for the winter and spring semesters. If all 299 applicants for summer and fall are eligible and approved, 418 loans for more than \$2 million will be awarded for 2009.

Donations to United Methodist Student Day can be made online. To learn more about United Methodist scholarships and loans, visit [www.gbhem.org](http://www.gbhem.org) and click on Loans and Scholarships.

\* Vicki Brown is associate editor and writer, Office of Interpretation, United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry.



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## "The Source" youth and young adult leader training is online

The Source – a training event for leaders of youth and young adult ministries, previously scheduled for various locations in the US, will now be available online. Check the website: [www.gbod.org/youngpeople](http://www.gbod.org/youngpeople) for more information.

## Ethnic Youth Scholarships for ACS

Thanks to a CPI grant, there are a limited number of scholarships for ethnic youth to attend ACS from July 20-25 at Methodist University in Fayetteville. The scholarships pay the full amount of the registration and will be awarded on a first-come first-served basis. To receive the application form, e-mail Robin Harry at [rharry@nccumc.org](mailto:rharry@nccumc.org) with a regular mailing address. There will be limited scholarship funds available from a general scholarship fund (supported by YSF) for financial assistance to attend Conference youth events based on financial need after this CPI grant is fully utilized. This scholarship fund is available to any youth and requires a separate application.

## Musicians & worship artists meet

IMAGINATION 2009, the national convocation of The Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts (FUMMWA) in conjunction with The United Methodist General Board of Discipleship (GBOD), will be held July 13-16 in Orlando, FL. More information, visit [www.UMFellowship.org](http://www.UMFellowship.org) or call the national Fellowship office at 1-800-952-8977.

## Deadlines set for youth programs

Youth and youth groups wishing to participate in leadership of Pilgrimage have until Aug. 31 to sign up. Youth wishing to apply for the house band may request the application by email from [senicholson@nccumc.org](mailto:senicholson@nccumc.org) – applications are due Aug. 31 and an audition (date to be determined) will be required. Youth groups desiring to offer an act of worship such as dance, drama, etc. must send the description of that offering with the adult contact information by August 31. Youth seeking to offer a testimony must submit the testimony in writing with the recommendation of a pastor/youth leader by Aug. 31. Any youth groups making a DVD to be shown at Pilgrimage must submit that also by Aug. 31. The deadline for the Award of Excellence in Youth Ministry application is Aug. 31. The application is available at [www.nccumc.org/youth](http://www.nccumc.org/youth) or by calling the Office of Youth Ministries at the Methodist Building.

## conference CALENDAR

### June

- 10-13 Annual Conference, Greenville
- 11-14 UMW South Atlantic Regional School
- 20-27 Appalachian Trail Hike for Youth
- 22-27 Summer Breakaway for Youth
- 29-July 2 SEJ and UMC Historical Society's Joint Meeting, Lake Junaluska

### July

- 11 Youth Resolutions Committee meeting 12:00pm
- 20-25 Annual Conference Session for Youth, Methodist University, Fayetteville
- 22-25 UMW School of Christian Mission, Methodist University, Fayetteville

For more information on upcoming North Carolina Conference events, visit [www.nccumc.org](http://www.nccumc.org) and click on "Calendar."

## Connecting with campus ministry

Many high school seniors know where they will be attending college in the fall by now. Pastors and youth leaders are encouraged to make these high school students aware of the United Methodist campus ministry available to them. In many universities there are Wesley Foundations or Wesley Fellowships that are the United Methodist ministry to, with and among college students on those campuses. In some cases, United Methodists are in partnership with other denominations (such as Presbyterian or Lutheran) for a United Christian Campus Ministry. Many private schools will have a Chaplain and religious life programs. For colleges/universities in NC – this campus ministry information is listed at <http://nccumc.org/youngadults/campus-ministries/>.

## Event for youth and young adults to explore their call to ministry

EXPLORATION 2009, scheduled for Nov. 13-15 in Dallas, will address The United Methodist Church's need for young clergy by offering youth and young adults who feel God's call a chance to explore that call. "Today more than ever, the denomination needs to sponsor events that invite, train, and support young people as they answer their call to ordained ministry," said the Rev. Meg Lassiat, director of student ministries, vocation, and enlistment at the Board of Higher Education and Ministry, which sponsors EXPLORATION.

Aimed at high school seniors through young adults aged 24 who are considering a call to ordained ministry, EXPLORATION participants will have the chance to talk with admissions staff from the 13 United Methodist schools of theology, attend workshops, and take part in small-group discussions. For more information, or to register for EXPLORATION, please visit [www.gbhem.org/exploration](http://www.gbhem.org/exploration) or [www.explorecalling.org](http://www.explorecalling.org).

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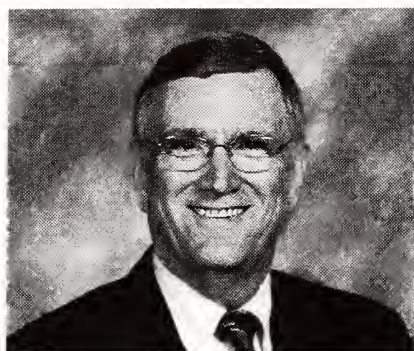
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By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

## July 5, 2009

**Text: Deuteronomy 5:1-27**

### "God Calls People to Covenant"

Somewhere along the way in your Bible study, you have probably encountered the comment that the first four commandments are about our relationship with God and the last six commandments are about our relationship with one another.

About relationship with God: verse 7—no other gods; verse 8—no idols; verse 11—using name of the Lord; verse 12—Sabbath keeping.

About relationship with one another: verse 16—honor parents; verse 17—no murder; verse 18—no adultery; verse 19—no stealing; no 20—no false witness; verse 21—no coveting.

That division seems a little too neat. The dividing line between how I view God and how I view my neighbor is a very porous line indeed.

Take Sabbath keeping, for example. Is it really just to please God? Jesus said "The Sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27). The Sabbath is not what we do in order to please God; the Sabbath is God's gift to please us!

Or take the matter of "do not murder." This is more than just our being nice to one another; this is more than having to do with how we get along with one another. This is about what we think of God. If we are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), to destroy another life deliberately is to eradicate a carrier of the image of God!

(Of course, the image of God is blurred in most of our lives, but God's prevenient grace continues to move within us to sharpen the focus of the image.)

In fact, John Wesley taught that when a non-believer does good, it is God's prevenient grace at work. When a heathen has a good conscience, it is the prevenient grace of God at work. So, serving God and serving neighbor are two sides of the same coin. Loving neighbor is about loving God. Loving God is about loving neighbor.

All of this leads to a question: if I keep seven of the commandments, is that a passing grade?

### What Someone Else Has Said:

In the early days of World War I, Henry Sloan Coffin preached sermons on the Ten Commandments (*The Ten Commandments*, Hodder & Stoughton George H. Doran Company). He wrote, "We (have been) driven to ask ourselves afresh what was wisdom and what was righteousness. The moral bases of life (must be) re-examined."

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Search me, O God..."

## July 12, 2009

**Text: Deuteronomy 16:1-8**

### "God Calls People to Remember"

On the wall of my study is a Charles M. Schulz drawing from his "Peanuts" comic strip. Charlie Brown is talking with Linus and says, "My grandfather loves to sing hymns. He can remember the words to over a hundred hymns." Linus asks, "Does he sing in the choir?" Charlie Brown answers, "No, he can't remember where the church is."

As I chuckle again at this gentle humor, I am struck with the irony

of the situation. That drawing, autographed by Charles Schulz, was given to me by the late Helen Crotwell. The sad irony is that in Helen's latter years, her memory powers eroded and she herself could not "remember where the church is" and friends had to do her remembering for her.

Being able to remember can be a precious gift. In this week's text, God calls on the family of God to recall even the difficult times (Deuteronomy 16:3). In fact, to help the Israelites stay in touch with the turbulent past, God instructs them to leave the comforts of their homes when they consider the Passover and to go to some other place that will be designated by God (16:5-6). Part of celebrating deliverance is to remember captivity. (Part of celebrating the empty tomb is to remember the cross.)

Remembering often draws its energy from community. (Just think of the delights in "Do you remember when...?" at a high school reunion.)

This text in Deuteronomy reminds us that we are not just who we are in this moment; we are also defined by roots, by heritage, by memory.

Perhaps it is not surprising that in our individualistic culture of the twenty-first century, we are tempted to ignore those things that connect us with our remembering.

Some "contemporary" church building designs intentionally leave off symbols that call up the past, even building worship spaces devoid of as basic a sign as the cross.

Some years ago when Duke suffered a massive loss in an ACC basketball tournament, one of the coaches said, "Here's to forgetting tonight's game." Coach Krzyzewski had the wiser comment: "Here's to never forgetting tonight's game."

That is a strange truth: we can really move on only when we continue to remember. After all, didn't Jesus say "Do this in remembrance of me" was the heart of "the new covenant"? (Luke 22:19-20)

### What Someone Else Has Said:

Laurence Stookey (*Eucharist*, Abingdon Press) wrote: "But for ancient Jews and early Christians... remembrance was a corporate act in which the event remembered was experienced anew through ritual repetition. To remember was to do something, not to think about something."

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of our ancient past,

God of our present tense, God of our good tomorrow..."

## July 19, 2009

**Text: Leviticus 8:1-13 "God Calls People to Special Service"**

It's funny how these things happen, "strange funny," not "ha ha funny." Of course, "strange funny" is what we use to describe something that we hesitate to call "providential," but...

I read the text for this lesson. It's about persons set apart for "special service." It is not a very big leap to say this session is about persons called to licensed or ordained ministry. This is where it got interesting.

First, as I worked on this session, I got an e-mail from a friend in California. I have followed with interest the pursuit he and his wife have had toward ordination. Both of them felt called to ordination.

I was in California a few weeks before their ordination interviews and met them for supper. "What would happen," I asked, "if one of you was approved and the other was not?" A shocked look crossed their faces. They had met in college and gone off to seminary together in pursuit of their dream of a common ministry. Then came the e-mail: she was approved; he was not.

Second, my cell phone rang and I began talking with a friend who lives now in Missouri. Until a few months ago, he was an ordained elder. After a mistake in moral judgment, he turned in his credentials and now is trying to find his place as a lay person.

Third, another e-mail brought me two rather arcane questions about how ordained persons are to be accountable for ministry after retirement and about how persons ordained elsewhere but serving in our area are responsible both to their home conference and to our conference here.

Ordination. What happens when the inner call ("I feel called") is not supported by the outer call of the Church ("You are not approved")? Ordination.

What happens to the gifts and grace recognized in ordination when one gives up ordination? Ordination.

What happens in the intricacies of church polity to support or undercut the realities of ordination? (I have used "ordination" here but many of the same questions occur for those licensed for ministry.)

It's something to think about.

See "Bible study," page 17

## ADOPTION

Park (BU: New Hope Purley charge) and Anna-Lisa Hunter announce the adoption of their son, Cameron, age 12, on April 9.

## MARRIAGE

Congratulations to Jeffrey Nash (BU: Evergreen) and Kristy Bradley on their marriage April 18 at Evergreen UMC.

## DEATHS

**HAWKINS, Rick**, husband of Patricia Hawkins (DU: Oxford) died April 22. A memorial service of Death and Resurrection was held on April 25 at Duke Memorial UMC in Durham.

**REED, John** (DU: retired) died May 2 in Arkansas. A funeral service was held May 6 at Pulaski Heights UMC in Little Rock, AR.



# Horne Memorial UMC celebrates 150th anniversary



Bertha Crabtree, Church Historian, and Emily Bagley, Sesquicentennial Committee Member, were part of the team which planned the 150th anniversary celebration and published a church history.

By Daphne Key \*

Horne Memorial UMC in Clayton celebrated its 150th anniversary on May 3. The Rev. Richard Stone, who served at Horne from 1993-1998, was the guest speaker at two services. Church historian, Bertha Crabtree, and her committee planned the celebration and wrote and published a church history.

Following the services, lunch was served in the fellowship hall where photos, documents, and memorabilia were displayed. Hundreds of people in attendance noted the metal tackle box that Sam Strickland locked the offering in each Sunday morning for over 30 years.

They also viewed the needlepoint brick doorstep and ivory funeral pall made by Charlotte Compton. Paul Keller, a member of Horne, commissioned Compton, a well-known seamstress, to design the

pall for his wife's funeral. Sam Robertson, who had just returned from World War II, supplied the silk she needed.

"When I came home from the War, I had stuffed an old piece of parachute in my duffle bag. Charlotte said she needed silk, and that was silk," Robertson said.

The memories of people like Strickland, Compton, Keller, and stories by Robertson are the foundation of Horne.

In 1859, five people had a vision for a church on the corner of Church and Second Streets. Today, led by the Rev. Dr. Alan P. Swartz, Horne is home to a congregation of more than 1000 and supports missions locally, nationally, and internationally.

\* Daphne Key is Communications Team Leader at Horne UMC, Clayton.

## July adult Bible study continued from page 16

### What Someone Else Has Said:

In *On Being a Christian* (Double-day), Hans Küng wrote: "In this community, therefore the supreme norm is not the (clergy), but God's will, the object of which, according to the message of Jesus Christ is the well being (of all)."

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Use me, O Lord, even me..."

July 26, 2009

Text: Leviticus 25:8-24

### "God Calls People to Jubilee"

The concept of jubilee (Leviticus 25:10, 23, 41) is an interesting one. Every fifty years, land is to "just sit" for a year. Property is to revert to original owners. Slaves are to be set free.

Scholars debate as to whether or not jubilee was ever practiced, but the theory is solid: everything really belongs to God so don't get used to owning it! (Leviticus 25:23)

The Old Testament word "yobel" is translated "jubilee." The word literally means "the blast of a trumpet." Another way of saying it is: "No one gets left out; this is going to be loud enough for everyone to hear."

Most of our economic and social systems create classes ("them that has and them that hasn't").

Even in structures designed to implement absolute equality, as George Orwell noted in 1984, "All animals are equal; some animals are more equal than others."

The revelation of jubilee is not an argument for a particular way of organizing life; it is a clarion call (Dare we say "trumpet?") that ultimately human interaction and human own-

ership is subject to God's final rule. Jubilee is radical stewardship.

The title of this lesson ("God Calls People to Jubilee") reminds us that "jubilee" does not come naturally to us. God has to call us to do it.

God has to jog our memory that the created order (Leviticus 25:10) and "things" (Leviticus 25:23) and relationships (Leviticus 25:41) all belong to God. The jubilee is a reminder that all these are just passing through our hands.

Would jubilee invite laziness? If I am aware that at the end of fifty years, property is going to revert to original owners and land will lie fallow, why should I work hard? Good grief! Just how self-focused can we be! God has given me forty-nine years out of fifty and I am complaining because I did not get the fiftieth!

Maybe the question of jubilee boils down to this: How can I live so that my life and my choices reflect God's ownership?

### What Someone Else Has Said:

William Sutton in *Methodism and the Shaping of American Culture* (eds., Nathan O. Hatch and John H. Wigger, Kingswood Books) describes a project undertaken by some African Methodist Episcopal, Zion members to implement jubilee in the early nineteenth century: "Such a system allowed for individual initiative and (some) upward mobility based on industry and frugality, while at the same time circumscribed the potential for accumulative abuses endemic to any accumulation of wealth and power."

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Giver of every good gift..."

## HOPE offered at Black Creek UMC

Black Creek UMC in Black Creek began a new mission and ministry in response to the current economic situation and the numbers of individuals who are seeking employment in Eastern North Carolina. This small-membership local church brought H.O.P.E. (Helping Others Pursue Employment) with a series of speakers focused on topics such as locating jobs, writing resumes, improving interview skills, job training/re-training, starting a business, and dealing with issues such as job-loss related depression. Contact the Rev. Rani Woodrow at (252) 238-3402 or at rwoodrow@nccumc.org for further information.

## Life Changing Letters from Paul

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# Bishops advocate comprehensive immigration reform in US

(GBGM) The full Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church has appealed to the President and Congress of the United States to support "comprehensive immigration reform" that would, among other goals, provide pathways to citizenship and reunify families separated by current policies.

A "Statement on the US Immigration Situation" was adopted on May 8 during a meeting of the council in Bethesda, Maryland. It builds on an earlier appeal issued a few weeks ago by a group of two dozen active and retired bishops.

The bishops said they as a group are "committed to advocate for comprehensive immigration reform that is humane and effective and that

upholds the human and civil rights of immigrants."

A petition for comprehensive legislative reform on immigration in the US is also contained in a resolution adopted last year by the denomination's General Conference, which meets every four years to conduct United Methodist business. A second resolution on global migration takes a stand in favor of justice and equal treatment for immigrants and refugees everywhere.

The new statement from the bishops lays out five components of comprehensive immigration reform in the US. In addition to a pathway to citizenship and reunification of families caused by deportation or detention, those points are:

- Increase the number of visas for short-term workers to come into the US States to work in a safe, legal, and orderly way.
- Extend legal protection to all workers who come for a certain period of time as well as for those who stay permanently including the right to bargain for higher wages, to protest against poor working conditions, and to preserve their human rights as workers, documented or undocumented.
- Eliminate privately-operated detention centers, which are not regulated by the federal or state governments, and end all indiscriminate raids.

Full text available at <http://tinyurl.com/um-bishops-on-immigration>.



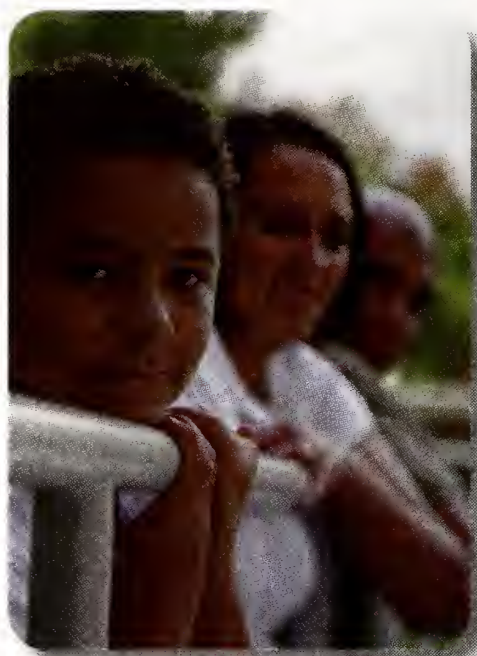
Bishop Minerva Carcaño marches in Phoenix with demonstrators to protest crackdowns on illegal immigrants by Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio. Carcaño, chair of the United Methodist Taskforce on Immigration, issued a statement encouraging President Obama to work for comprehensive immigration reform. (Photo by Kathy Gilbert / UMNS)

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*"When we choose to honor, love and care for others, we multiply God's blessings and, through our ordinary natural means, elevate them to the level of the miraculous."*

- Rev. Randy Blanchard; Fellowship UMC, Hamlet

## Developing process for making disciples

Burning Bush, offered through GBOD's Discipleship University, is a two-year experience for congregations to focus on developing an intentional process for making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

The first group of congregations enrolled in Burning Bush recently completed their second session.

In the redesigned format of Burning Bush, the curriculum is comprised of five multi-day experiences, the first and fifth experiences will be held in Nashville at the General Board of Discipleship.

The middle three sessions will be conducted at each of the participating congregations and facilitated by GBOD congregational guides assigned to congregational teams.

Participation in Burning Bush is open to congregations of any size. New learning groups begin approximately every six months. The next learning group (Burning Bush 2) begins on August 27-30 in Nashville. Registration is due by June 15. Cost is \$125 per person per session, plus travel, lodging, and some meal expenses. Burning Bush 3 begins April 22-25, 2010.

Congregations that are ready to be intentional about Christian discipleship can find additional information and apply for participation in Burning Bush at [www.gbod.org/burningbush](http://www.gbod.org/burningbush) or by calling 877-899-2780, ext. 1760.

**Burning Bush**





L-R: Anna Sumner and Nancy Dillman

## Anna Sumner honored for 50 years of perfect attendance at Epworth UMC, Clinton

Anna Sumner (left) was recently honored by Epworth UMC in Clinton for 50 years of perfect attendance.

"I was brought up to go to church as a child. It's the natural thing to do. It's just my life," she stated. The presentation was made by Nancy Dillman, Sunday School representative.

Sumner has served as lay leader, choir member, Sunday School teacher, Bible School director, UMYF director, and served on almost every committee in the church.

She is a certified lay speaker and an active member of UMW having served in various positions on the district UMW.

## Annual retreat for those in cross-racial appointments explores "A New Day - Retelling the Story," includes dialogue led by local church lay persons

The annual retreat of persons in Cross-Racial and Cross Cultural Churches was held on April 14-15 at Camp Rockfish.

Bishop Al Gwinn challenged the participants in the opening worship service to be faithful disciples. The theme for the retreat was "A New Day - Retelling the Story." The biblical stories can be re-told through the eyes of those who serve in cross-racial appointment and may inspire, inform and strengthen others in their faith and commitment to become greater disciples of Jesus Christ.

Dr. Joy Moore, assistant dean for Lifelong Learning at Duke Divinity School and adjunct professor of Homiletics & the Practice of Ministry led participants into "Talking to Ourselves about Cross Racial Ministry" through stories of her own struggles in a cross-racial appointment and preached during a multicultural worship service.

The retreat included a dialogue led by lay persons about the experiences of local churches involved in cross-racial appointments. Participants included Nan Eubank and Dan Dees from the Parker/Sandy



## Biblical storytelling of Gospel of Mark at Swansboro UMC

Tracy Radosevic, a member of the NOBS (Network of Biblical Storytellers), presented the Gospel of Mark at Swansboro UMC on Wednesday during Holy Week. Tracy was a Duke Divinity student intern at the church in the summer of 1988, and she has maintained ties with many residents in the area. Radosevic is an international presenter known for her Biblical storytelling. She used drama as well as recitation of the entire gospel, and her presentation was "mesmerizing" according to Susan and Bill Stuart, SUMC members. John Tyson, pastor, said that Tracy's presentation was among the highlights of Holy Week. She currently resides in Baltimore and travels in the United States and abroad to share her ministry. Radosevic's international travels include many cities in Australia, South Africa, and England. She has also conducted two storytelling tours to Israel with "Women of the Bible" as the theme.



Tracy Radosevic

## 2009 Clergy Academy of Christian Witness

The Commission on Evangelism held the Academy of Christian Witness for clergy April 21-23. Participants were trained on Evangelism as Mission, Preaching, Worship, Spiritual Formation, Reaching the Missing Generation, Children Youth, and Young Adults, Getting the Word Out, Personal Faith Sharing, and Taking It to the Streets. Presenters included Dr. Tim Reaves, the Rev. Toni Wood, Dr. Marty Cauley, Dr. Jerry Jackson, the Rev. Terry Hobbs, Dr. Laura Early, the Rev. Branson Sheets, the Rev. Powell Osteen, district superintendent, the Rev. Yuko Miller, the Rev. Neal Salter, the Rev. Carol Dean, Brenda Brown and Tom Walden. The Denman Award banquet was held and the



Front Row (L-R): Tom Walden, Vermel Taylor, Kelli Sorg, Yuko Miller, Renee Edwards, Terry Hobbs, Karen Angel, James Malloy Second Row (L-R): Robert (Bobby) Dean, Richard Baldwin, Larry Bowden, Brenda Brown, William (Bill) Creech, Toni Wood, Karl Grant Third Row (L-R): Bruce Allen, Alex Maultsby, Linda Harris, Ben Wells, Elaine Swett, Jerry Martin, Tim Reaves Fourth Row (L-R): Doug Johnson, Thurman Horney, Neal Salter Not pictured: Richard Jackson, Tony Moreau, Ray Pearce, Martha Lewis, Carol Dean

award recipients will be recognized at Annual Conference. This conference was also a time of worship and spiritual renewal for serving Jesus Christ in order to make disciples and to transform the world.



Grove/Hoke Charge (the Rev. Richard Jackson, pastor); Antonia Ban and Sharon Upchurch from Cornerstone UMC (the Rev. Kong Suk Namkung, pastor); Dorothy Barefoot and Louie Jackson from Epworth UMC (the Rev. Chang Bae Kim, pastor); and Rev. Eldrick Davis, of First UMC, Havelock.

The sharing of stories highlighted the positive things happening in cross-racial appointments through the openness and willingness of the church members to be faithful servants of Christ as they seek to proclaim the Gospel and make disciples of

Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Closing communion was led by Dr. Lawrence E. Johnson. The Rev. Paul Woo IL Lee preached at the closing worship service.

The guiding scripture for this annual retreat of persons in Cross-Racial and Cross Cultural Churches was: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slaver or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus, Male and female; for all of you are one in Christ" (Galatians 3:28).



# Fan the Flame explores small membership church ministry

The fire of renewal and revival burned brightly as about 65 participants representing 17 churches/charges gathered in rural Bladen County for the 2009 Fan the Flame Small Membership Church Revitalization event.

The event was hosted by Windsor UMC and Bladen Charge churches at Windsor UMC in the small, rural community of Ammon. Fan the Flame was designed to both inform and inspire small membership churches in the process of being renewed and revitalized by the power of the Holy Spirit.

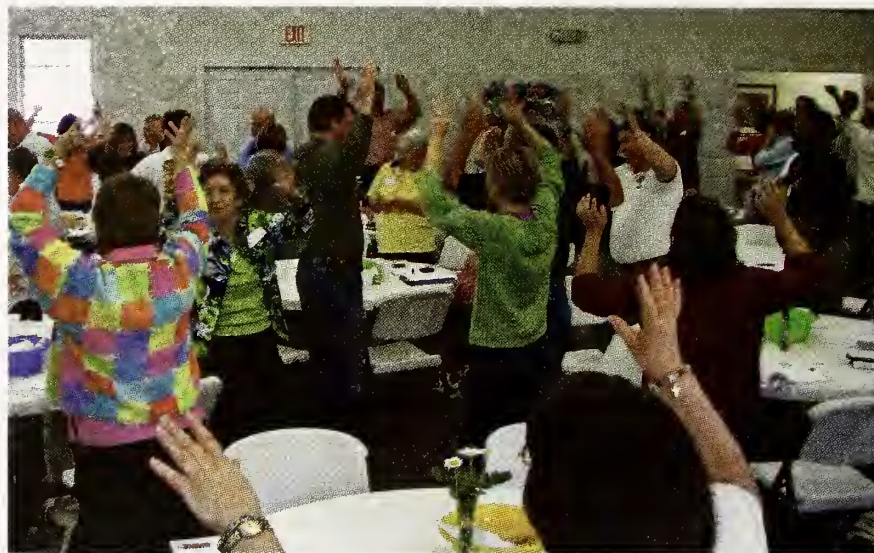
Presentations were led by Dr. Tim Reaves and many laity of the Bladen Charge churches. Included in the topics covered were: Excellent Worship, Evangelism, Missions, Church Dynamics, Vacation Bible School, Children and Youth Ministry, Effective Preaching and the Ministry of

Prayer with a special emphasis on Healing and Wholeness.

All presentations were focused on ministry in the Small Membership Church. The Event was held April 17-19 and began with worship, was saturated with worship, and ended with worship on Sunday morning.

Windsor UMC in Ammon has grown in average worship attendance from 10 to 110 in the past 12 years. It funded the major percentage of cost for the event to share what God has done there so that other churches may experience it too.

The Conference Office of Congregational Development also helped sponsor the event, and the Rev. Carol Goehring led the opening worship. Fan the Flame was designed by Reaves three years ago as his Doctor in Ministry project dissertation. Windsor plans to hold the fourth Fan the Flame in April 2010.



The third Fan the Flame Small Membership Church Revitalization event was hosted by Windsor UMC and Bladen Charge churches. The event was designed by Dr. Tim Reaves to both inform and inspire small membership churches in the process of being renewed and revitalized by the power of the Holy Spirit. This year, 65 participants gathered representing 17 churches/charges.



The three-day Fan the Flame event began with worship, was saturated with worship, and ended with worship on Sunday morning. Opening worship was led by the Rev. Carol Goehring, conference executive director of Connectional Ministries.

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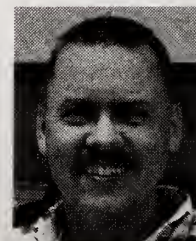
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Dr. Tim Reaves (center) raises a green card, asking to address the conference. To his right is his wife, Tina, and to his left is John Carter, a lay member from the Bladen Charge. Each member of Annual Conference received a green card in their packet as the manner in which to request recognition by the Bishop to speak at a microphone. Reaves, pastor of the Bladen Charge, developed the "Fan the Flame" program for small membership churches which was highlighted by Bishop Al Gwinn in his "State of the Church Address" (See article below) during the opening worship service. (Photo by Bill Norton)

## A time for worship, voting, celebration, connections: 2009 Annual Conference

By Bill Norton \*

Between opening with Holy Communion and singing "And Are We Yet Alive" on the first day and the service of Baptismal Renewal and Fixing of Clergy Appointments on the last day, the North Carolina Annual Conference worshiped, celebrated developing and existing ministries, endorsed the work of Conference Trustees on construction of a new conference headquarters building, took action on two budgets, and participated in sessions for learning.

The Conference met June 10-13 in the Greenville Convention Center, the fourth gathering in that location. "A Future with Hope" is the quadrennial theme for the conference with a special emphasis on "Learning."

Bishop Alfred Wesley Gwinn, Jr. served as the presiding officer for his fifth conference in North Carolina. A total of 1,622 members registered at the conference: 795 laity and 827 clergy.

In a change from past years, the Executive Sessions for Clergy and Laity were held in different locations at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, June 10. Clergy met at Covenant UMC, about four miles from the Convention Center and laity met in the Convention Center.

The conference officially began with the singing the hymn "And Are We Yet Alive," written by Charles Wesley in 1749. John Wesley, founder of the denomination, began the practice of opening annual meetings of Methodists by singing the hymn. The practice is followed by Methodists around the world.

### Worship and Bible study

Early morning Communion was available Thursday, Friday, and Saturday in the Hilton Hotel. A Bible Study began the Thursday and Friday sessions. The Rev. Grace Hackney, pastor of Cedar Grove UMC, led the Thursday study and the Rev. Edith Gleaves, deputy secretary of the General Board of Global Ministries and a member of the NC Conference, led the Friday study.

Conference members were introduced to a Taizé worship service on Friday evening. The service featured a calming, contemplative atmosphere created by group singing, lit candles, and the use of visual icons. Singing consisted of short melodies sung repetitively as long as the worshipers and the Spirit desire.

### Budgets and business

One of the first matters of business before the conference on Wednesday, June 10 was the introduction of the 2010 budget. The usual process in the NC Conference is to present a budget for approval one year, raise the money the

## Stay true to the mission, living on fertile ground

By Reggie Ponder, Jr. \*

Both Bishop Al Gwinn and Greenville Mayor Patricia Dunn told the opening session of annual conference that the current economic crisis is a challenge and opportunity that requires the church to stay true to its mission and message. "The government really can't do it all," Dunn said, explaining the faith community in Greenville had made a big difference in areas such as addiction recovery and homelessness. Hopelessness is "debilitating to the human spirit" and the church has the message of hope, she said.

In his annual "State of the Church" address at the open-



# Christians can do more than ever for the Lord *from page 1*

ing of conference, Gwinn said that while economic difficulties pose a special challenge to congregations, churches must not allow tough economic times to deter them from their mission.

Congregations must continue to reach the lost, feed the hungry, seek justice for all, and make disciples of young and old, Gwinn said.

He said J.B. Phillips' premise in the book "Your God is Too Small" is "right on target."

Those at Wednesday afternoon's opening worship heeded Gwinn's call to "be more generous than you intended to be" and contributed more than \$10,900 in a special offering for M.E.R.C.I.

The biggest challenge for the church "is to let God be God," Gwinn said, adding he sees a hunger for that in the conference. Congregations are trying to "connect the God dots" and lay down their own will to be part of God's great work in the world, he said. Gwinn cited signs of vitality within the Conference:

- ◆ Congregations that are healthy disciple-making centers – missional, relational and incarnational.
- ◆ Partnership with the Duke Endowment on the Thriving Rural Communities Initiative.
- ◆ Second Duke Divinity School rural fellow appointed this year.
- ◆ Solid Rock, Cedar Grove and Sandy Plains functioning as rural teaching congregations.
- ◆ Bladen Charge now a new teaching charge, holding the "Fan the Flame" event for small membership churches.
- ◆ Healthy congregations assessment tool being widely used.

Gwinn said stories are coming from every corner of the Conference about churches becoming more missional, relational and incarnational.

He noted an indication of the



Bishop Al Gwinn

struggles many churches are facing: 14 churches in the Conference are moving from full-time to part-time pastor because of financial difficulties. In light of the tough economic times, effort and sacrifice are needed to strengthen all congregations, he said.

God will guide churches, Gwinn said, in understanding the difference between what they can't afford and what they can't afford not to do.

Because the "overwhelming majority" of churches and thousands of church members are looking for "sign-acts" of willingness to be in solidarity with all who are affected by the economic downturn, the Council of Bishops has approved a rollback of the salaries of active bishops to the 2008 level, Gwinn said.

In addition, meetings of the Council of Bishops will last fewer days and the bishops will stay at less expensive hotels, he said.

But even in the economic downturn, Christian leaders can do more than ever before for the Lord and for his church and they become more effective and more efficient, he said.

The bishop noted other efforts to reduce costs while strengthening ministry: A task force will study superintendency in the Conference and report its finding to the 2010 annual conference. Annual conference is recommended to last two and

a half days next year, rather than three and a half.

Gwinn said the Conference has a growing number of competent, committed clergy. "We are blessed," he said of the Conference's clergy leadership.

The Academy of Leadership Excellence is finding a full house at almost every event it offers for learning and renewal, he said.

The bishop also reported that more than \$12 million is being invested in the clergy health initiative.

"One thing we do know for sure: This is a very challenging time to lead a congregation," Gwinn said. Familiar ways of doing church are no longer working and "churches can no longer fall back on what they've done before and expect anything more than a continuing slow death."

Shared leadership among clergy

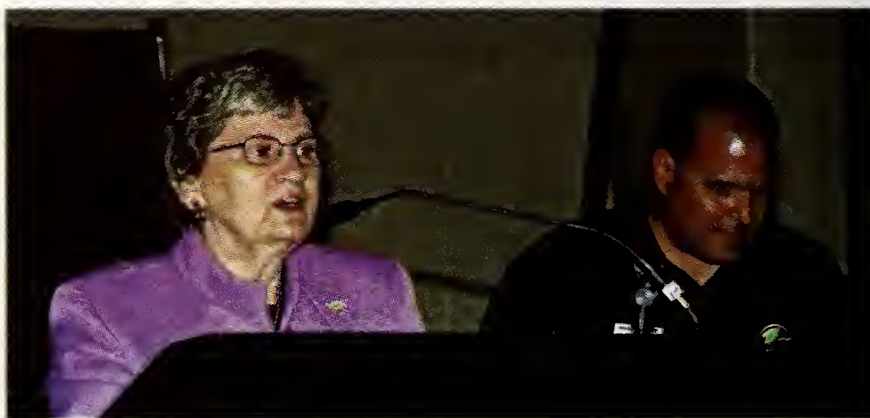
and laity is "absolutely essential" for meeting the current challenges, he said. The pastor's role includes asking the right questions and recruiting the right people, he said.

Opportunity abounds for the Conference's congregations, Gwinn said, given that North Carolina is the 10th most populous state, the fourth fastest-growing state, and 70 percent of people are "functionally unchurched" according to a recent Gallup poll.

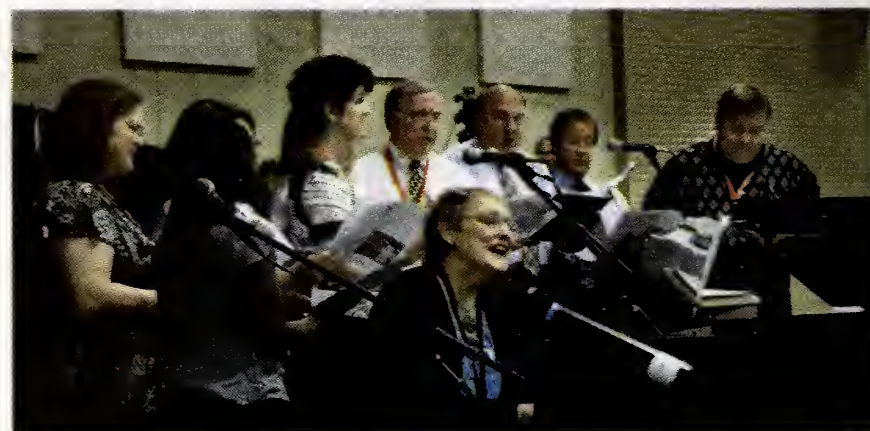
"It is easy to see that God has placed us in very fertile ground," Gwinn said.

Jesus' parable of the lost sheep provides the church a model of what to do, he said.

\* The Rev. Reggie Ponder, Jr. is pastor of Perkins UMC in Shawboro and staff writer for The Daily Advance in Elizabeth City.



Robbie Barrett (left), widow of the Rev. Troy Barret, concluded her 23 years of employment with the NC Conference at the close of the 2009 gathering. Barrett was honored during a presentation by new NC UM Camp and Retreat Ministries Executive Director, Bobby Harris (right). The Barrett family donated funds for a new, handicap-accessible cabin at Camp Don Lee. (Photo by Reggie Ponder, Jr.)



Elise Eslinger (seated at piano), worship and music leader at the Annual Conference, directs group of vocalists. Many of the vocalists, along with a number of instrumentalists also provided the musical foundations of the Taizé service. (Photo by Bill Norton)



Lay member Courtney Jennings, 15, attended her 11th annual conference. To her right is her grandfather, the Rev. Kermit Braswell. (Photo by Bill Norton)



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The Rev. Adam Hamilton talks with conference members following one of his sessions. (Photos by Bill Norton)

## Hamilton sees best years ahead if the Church improves in leadership, worship, outreach to community

By Reggie Ponder, Jr. \*

The Rev. Adam Hamilton told the N.C. Annual Conference during its gathering at the Greenville Convention Center that the best years are ahead for The United Methodist Church if congregations will combine Methodism's affinities for the gray areas of faith and life with a "willingness to do whatever it takes" to reach people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Hamilton, pastor of the 12,000-member United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, KS which has been called the most influential mainline church in America, told those gathered that Methodism's unique capacity for reaching 21st century people is its ability to keep together things that often become separated: minds and hearts; personal holiness and grace; evangelical Gospel and social Gospel.

Church of the Resurrection began with four members in 1990 and met in a funeral home. It has grown exponentially while pursuing its mission to be a place where nonreligious and nominally religious people become committed Christians. "Jesus Christ is the answer to the deepest longings of the human heart," Hamilton said.

He said 21st century young adults are moving away from fundamentalism. He also said they tend to begin their experience of Christianity with missions, instead of becoming Christians and then growing in discipleship until they become involved in missions.

Young adults in the 21st century may be unsure about the church but they want to change the world, he said. As an example, Hamilton told of a young woman who showed up for a 5K run at the church — her first time at the church — with a check for \$2,000 for children in Africa.

"I believe in the church," Ham-

ilton said, adding he believes the best years can be ahead for The United Methodist Church. But there's no "future with hope" if congregations keep doing the same things and expecting different results, he said.

He noted some sobering facts:

- ◆ Professions of faith are down 18 percent.
- ◆ United Methodist Women has 14 years left at its current rate of decline.
- ◆ In 44 years, at the current rate of decline, no one would be worshipping in United Methodist churches.

Still, he said, "I believe in a future with hope." Hamilton said improvement in three areas would increase vitality: Leadership; Worship and preaching; Outreach to the community.

A key question to ask when clarifying a church's vision and mission, said Hamilton, is: "What do we have at this church that makes people's hearts beat a little faster and makes them willing to sacrifice and go deeper?"

He shared the story of two rural churches in Missouri, Drake's Chapel and Calhoun, that had dropped to 7 and 30, respectively, in average worship attendance. A year and a half later, after Conference Lay Leader Margie Briggs went to the churches as pastor, worship attendance numbers had risen to 30 and 60.

Church members credited a food ministry and outreach for the explosive growth. "If it can happen at Drake's Chapel and it can happen at Calhoun, it can happen where you are," Hamilton said.

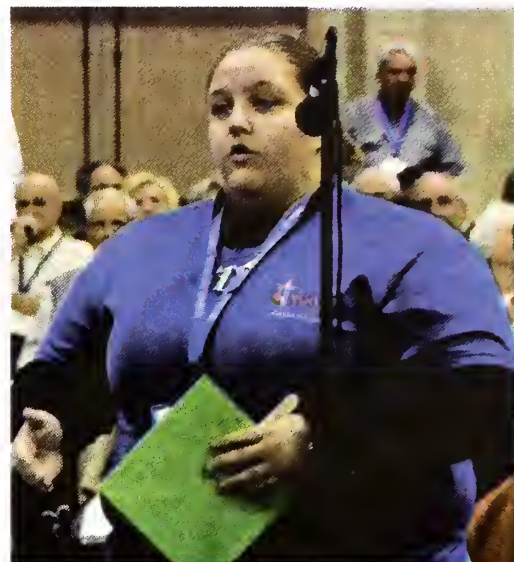
Hamilton's three presentations to the 2009 annual conference may be viewed online at <http://nccumc.org/annual-conference/>.

\* The Rev. Reggie Ponder, Jr. is pastor of Perkins UMC in Shawboro and staff writer for The Daily Advance in Elizabeth City.



Adam Hamilton

## Addressing the Conference

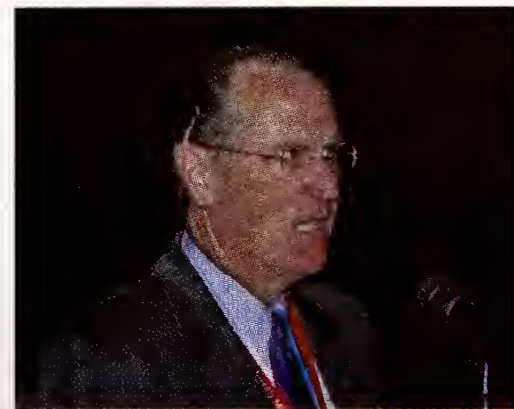


ABOVE: Danielle Levine, young adult from the Fayetteville District, speaks at a microphone. (Photo by Bill Norton)



ABOVE: The Rev. Edgar DeJesus spoke during budget discussions. (Photos by Reggie Ponder, Jr.)

BELOW: LaNella Smith, Durham District lay leader, comments on a constitutional amendment.



BELOW: The Rev. Tom Greener, pastor of Mt Sylvan UMC in the Durham District and chair of the Conference Connectional Table Stewardship Team, endorses the budget from the table and CF&A without changes. (Photo by Reggie Ponder, Jr.)



## 2009 NC Annual Conference wrap-up *continued from page 1*

next year, and spend it the third year.

Because of the economic downturn being felt across the Conference and nation, the Conference Connectional Table (CCT) and Council on Finance and Administration (CF&A) brought a reduced budget for 2010 with changes in 17 line items. The recommended reduction was \$492,439.

The two items with the largest reductions were: \$134,645 for Clergy Counseling Salary and Benefits and \$125,030 for the Minister's Transition Fund. Reasons cited for these reductions were coverage for clergy counseling being in the health insurance program and accumulated earnings in the transition fund investment.

Motions to restructure the ministry of clergy counseling and restore \$63,300 to the line item and another to restore \$3,600 to the Hispanic/Latino Ministries line item were not supported by the conference, leaving the line items as presented to the conference.

Following a formula adopted by previous annual conferences, CF&A recommended that the salary for districts superintendents be set at the average of the top 25 pastors' salaries in the Conference, or \$102,902. Several motions were offered relating to the salary.

A motion was made Milford Oxendine to freeze district superintendent salaries at the 2008 level for 2010 and keep it at that level for five years. The motion was defeated and recommended salary for district superintendents was approved.

Final action on the budget introduced the first day of conference, as required by conference rules, is taken on the final day of the conference after all other matters related to finances had been decided.

While considering a proposal to increase the 2010 minimum salary for full-time clergy to \$41,996.00 and students pastors to \$27,297.00,

Jerry Martin, pastor of Swepsonville, proposed freezing the salaries at the "2009 level and asked for a covenant for all pastors to reject all raises." His motion was adopted.

The action set the 2010 minimum salary for full-time clergy at \$40,319.00 and \$26,207.00 for student pastors. At least \$2,400 was set for the recommended amount for utilities expense and at least \$4,000 was the amount set for travel expense at each charge.

On Saturday, Paul Stallsworth, pastor of St. Peter's UMC in Morehead City asked for a reconsideration of the 2010 salary for district superintendents. When his motion passed, he moved 'to freeze 2010 DS salary at the 2009' which was approved, reducing the salary for each district superintendent to \$100,388 from the previously approved amount of \$102,902. As a result, the district superintendent salary line in the 2010 budget was reduced to the 2009 level.

Including proposed reductions, the approved 2010 budget was set at \$19,590,427.

A proposal by Steve Formo, pastor of the Halifax Charge to freeze the 2011 budget at the 2010 level was not supported. The proposed budget for 2011 was set at \$20,276,199 - a 3.5% increase over the revised 2010 budget.

### Conference headquarters

During the 2008 Annual Conference, the Board of Trustees was authorized to sell the United Methodist building and adjoining property at 1307 Glenwood Avenue in Raleigh. The Trustees were also authorized to use the proceeds of the sale to build a new conference headquarters on property the Conference owned on Waterfield Ridge Place in Garner, east of the intersection of I-40 and US-70.

The Board of Trustees reported to the 2009 Annual Conference on the sale of the current conference headquarters and progress on the con-



(L-R) The Rev. Carol Dean, chair of Conference Evangelism, presented Harry Denman Evangelism Awards to Helen Little of Clayton and the Rev. Eddie Hill of Supply. Little was cited for, since 2002, raising \$256,000 to aid Haiti, packed six- 40 ft. containers of garden tools, seeds, clothing, school supplies and other items, raised money for seven schools, four wells, one church, and one orphanage. In addition to her 44 trips to Haiti, Little has been on mission trips to at least six other countries. Hill was cited for the numbers of new members and baptisms at churches he has served, including 287 new members, 73 professions of faith, and 86 baptisms in 2002 at Sharon UMC in Holden Beach. In 2008, his ministry led to 50 new members and 14 confessions of faith by baptism at Sharon. (Photo by Bill Norton)

struction of the new headquarters.

The new building will have two floors with approximately 33,500 square feet of space. It is designed in hopes of acquiring a "green building" certification. Groundbreaking was held on May 29, Cashar Evans, Trustee chair, told the conference.

There was discussion about the interior design of the building. A motion was made by Dr. Reggie Ponder, pastor of Rose Hill UMC, requiring hearings by the Trustees with all members of the Conference, boards and agency chairs and other interested parties "to be given an opportunity to receive and review the plans...to share insights and concerns and to pose questions, as well as to offer suggestions" concerning the plans for the building.

During the discussion, Evans reviewed the procedure followed earlier for ideas and suggestions from individuals and groups before design of the building was completed. Annual Conference members did not sustain the Ponder motion.

During the Friday morning session, a design for each floor was displayed on the wide screens in the conference. Christine Dodson, conference treasurer, presented a "walking tour" of the building using the floor plans and answered questions from Conference members.

"I move that this body again validate the work already done by our Trustees relating to the construction of our new building with a resounding affirmative vote saying to our trustees well done and that we approve at this time the floor and building plans and also the finance

plan as submitted this morning and yesterday and that we urge the trustees to move on with this project with great dispatch," said Ferrell Blount, a member of Bethel UMC.

The motion was seconded and after the vote, Bishop Al Gwinn announced that the conference by its vote had "overwhelmingly affirmed" the Trustees.

### Learning workshops

On Thursday evening, members chose to attend one of five workshops: "Reaching and Transforming the Lives of a New Generation," "Mission: Possible, Transforming Existing Congregations," "Where Does that Conference Money Go?," "Web Presence, Web Schmesence: Why Do I Need One of Those?," and "Skills for Healthy Storming: How to Navigate through Conflict."

Friday afternoon and evening were also opportunities for learning. The featured speaker was the Rev. Adam Hamilton who presented three teaching sessions. Hamilton is senior pastor of the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection near Kansas City, KS. The Conference Board of the Laity sponsored his visit and sessions at the gathering.

His overall theme was "Leading Beyond the Walls" with a session each on leadership, worship, and preaching and evangelism.

### Acts 2 Churches

On Friday morning, 79 congregations were recognized as Acts 2 Churches demonstrating health and

See "2009 Annual Conference," page 5



(L-R) Bishop Al Gwinn's wife, Joyce, and his mother, Wanda, were introduced to the conference by Powell Osteen, Wilmington District superintendent, and his wife, Mary Lynne (both not pictured). The Wilmington District was the host district for the conference. (Photo by Reggie Ponder, Jr.)



## 2009 NC Annual Conference wrap-up *continued from page 4*

vitality through Radical Hospitality, Passionate Worship, Intentional Spiritual Formation, and Risk-Taking Mission and Ministry to the World.

### Laity Executive Session

The Wednesday morning Executive Session for laity focused on the Conference Mission / Vision Statement: "Healthy Congregations and Effective Leaders in Every Place Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World."

During the Executive Session, laity participated in a time of prayer, praise and worship based on the Conference theme "A Future with Hope" and heard messages by DVD by Bishop Ernest Lyght of the West Virginia Annual Conference and Dr. Leonard Sweet. They also had time for orientation to the Conference.

### Celebration of the Laity

On Friday afternoon there was a Celebration of the Laity. Emily Innes, conference lay leader, called on presentations from Conference UM Youth President James Van Staaldin, UM Women President Ann Davis, newly elected President of UM Men, Tom Starnes, and Director of Lay Speaking Ministries Linda Harris.

The Celebration concluded with the recognition of outstanding lay ministries from each district:

Burlington: Hillsborough UMC - "Prayers and Squares Ministry," Durham: McMannen UMC - "Reconciliation and Justice Ministries," Elizabeth City: Elizabeth City District Churches - "Mobile Food Pantry," Fayetteville: Solid Rock UMC - "Solid Foundation, Inc.," Goldsboro: Garriss Chapel UMC - "Dana's Wardrobe," and Greenville: Salem UMC - "Kids for Jesus."

Also, New Bern: Bethlehem UMC - "Helping Hands Ministry," Raleigh: Fuquay-Varina UMC - "Covenant Community Garden," Rockingham: Hickory Grove UMC - "Outreach Ministry," Rocky Mount: Jackson UMC - "Holiday Ministries," Sanford:



The Church and Society Team gave the Jack and Kay Crum Award to The Sanford Circuit for the "No Men Left Behind" ministry which includes a job skills program, mentoring, advocacy, and spiritual development to persons in their rural community, especially reaching out to young African-American men. Shown (L-R) Brian Wingo, chair of Church and Society; Arthur Simmons, a member of the Broadway Church of God, an ecumenical partner; the Rev. James Malloy, pastor of the Sanford Circuit; Dr. Steve Compton, Sanford district superintendent; and Steve Taylor, conference director of missions. (Photo by Bill Norton)

Page Memorial UMC - White Christmas Ministry," and Wilmington: Pine Valley UMC - "Celebrate Recovery Ministry."

### Remembering, ordaining, celebrating, learning

In other matters before the Conference, members:

- ♦ Learned that for the sixth year in a row, no increase in health insurance premiums was proposed for active participants and for the fourth year in a row for retired participants.
- ♦ Celebrated the ordination of 30 elders, the commissioning of 17 probationary (provisional) elders and one probationary (provisional) deacon, recognition of one new associate member, certification of one lay minister, and the recognition of 23 first-time local pastors.
- ♦ Remembered 14 deceased clergy and 13 spouses at a memorial service.
- ♦ Rejoiced in the ministry of 23 pastors entering retirement.
- ♦ Received a presentation on Rethink Church by Ken Sloan of UM Communications.

♦ Voted in favor of three resolutions: supporting a tobacco-free environment, setting a priority on good health and wellbeing, calling for an overhaul of the criminal justice system; members decided not to require local churches to put a wheel chair in their lobby or foyer.

♦ Said "no" to amendments related to the world-wide nature of the church. Four

amendments received more "yes" than "no" votes: numbers eight (adds gender), nine (minimum number of 100 voting delegates at Jurisdictional Conference), 19 (increases clergy classification who vote for delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences) and 22 (formally recognizes work of Baltimore-Washington Conference in Bermuda). Amendment 22 was the only one to pass with a two-thirds majority.

- ♦ Learned how work of the Conference Connectional Ministries in partnership with local churches serve as examples of the Seven Pathways.
- ♦ Celebrated the ministries of three district lay leaders and conference president of UMM on their retirement: Ruth Wood, Rockingham District (2005-2009); Keith Stewart, Goldsboro District (2005-2009); Carlin Johnson, Raleigh District (2002-2009); and UMM retiring president Barry Merrill (2004-2008).
- ♦ Viewed a DVD with examples and heard Bruce Stanley, CEO of the Methodist Home for Children, talk about families assisted through foster care and adoption.
- ♦ Heard that the Goldsboro District and 128 clergy will participate in a pilot Clergy Health Initiative to support physical, spiritual, and emotional health of participants.
- ♦ Learned that 10 fellows were a part of the Thriving Rural Communities Initiative to develop their leadership for serving in rural churches.
- ♦ Heard that the Congregational Development Team has the responsibility of administering \$10 Club Grants to congregations, providing salary support for an emerging Hispanic ministry in

Apex, supported the Fan the Flame Retreat for small membership church revitalization, and sponsored MISSIONINSITE, a demographic research tool.

- ♦ Learned that the Food Task Force has met to consider the way individuals eat is connected to the problems of climate change, economic meltdown, the energy crisis, and health care and to ask what resources are in the scripture and in the Eucharist to meet these challenges.
- ♦ Received the report of the Conference Statistician showing that, comparing figures available last year with new figures this year, conference local church membership is 237,159, an increase of 331 but that worship attendance of 83,052 is down 1,339 and church school attendance is 38,845, a loss of 324.
- ♦ Celebrated the following award presentations: Key Taylor to Wesley UMC of Rigelwood, Evangelism to the Rev. Eddie Hill of Sharon UMC in the Wilmington District and to Helen Little of Horne Memorial in Clayton, and the Saints of God Award for Stewardship and Service to the children of Macedonia UMC in the Sanford District.
- ♦ Provided offering of \$10,966.92 for MERCI, \$5,038 for the Costa Rica Mission Project, and \$6,106 for the ministry of the laity.
- ♦ The 2010 Annual Conference will meet at the Greenville Convention Center June 10-12, one day less than in 2009.



The Key Taylor Award was presented to Wesley UMC of Rigelwood, Wilmington District. Receiving the award (in center) are Lay Leader Carroll Pearsall and the Rev. Bill Altman, pastor. The award was presented by the Rev. Sam Loy (left), chair of the Board of Missions. (Photo by Bill Norton)

\* Bill Norton is conference director of communication and editor of the NCCC Advocate. Assisting with the article were Taylor Mills and Reggie Ponder.



# "Whatever the problem, Jesus is the answer," says Gleaves

By Reggie Ponder, Jr. \*

The Rev. Edith Gleaves talked about missions and hope in the Friday morning Bible study at annual conference.

Gleaves, deputy secretary for mission personnel with the General Board of Global Ministries, is a member of the NC Annual Conference.

In a time of economic crisis, it's easy to "start fretting toward the future," Gleaves said. Even the present is difficult, with people being laid off from jobs, having their pay cut, losing benefits, and losing homes because they can't pay their mortgages. It's even worse in other countries, she said.

"Can God's voice be heard and discerned in the signs and the challenges of our times?" she asked.

The North Carolina Annual Conference is learning and hearing God's voice, which makes the difference, she said. We know that "whatever the problem, Jesus Christ is the answer."

The future is full of hope as long as the church is involved in God's mission, she said. "From Genesis to Revelation the Scriptures bear wit-



The Rev. Edith Gleaves delivered the Friday Bible study. (Photo by Reggie Ponder, Jr.)

ness to a mission that begins in God, belongs to God and will be fulfilled by God at the end of time."

Gleaves used as basic biblical references for the study Matt. 28:19-20; John 17:18; Luke 24:49; and Philipians 2:5-8.

Jesus went to all, but especially the poor, outcast and oppressed, Gleaves said. Jesus called all people to repent and took upon himself the sorrows, hurts and sins of all people. Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead. In Christ, God was reconciling

the world to Himself, restoring his intention for creation.

"Our Wesleyan heritage provides a fundamental principal for mission," she said. Mission "flows from God's amazing grace."

For Wesley, solidarity with the poor is expressed by providing direct aid to the poor and in prophetic ministry addressing the systemic causes of poverty, she said.

Citing Jesus' portrayal of the sheep and the goats at the last judgment in Matt. 25:31-36, Gleaves said "we are acting like sheep in the North Carolina Annual Conference."

The sheep in Jesus' image are those who care for the needy.

The Conference reaches out around the world through the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), United Methodist Women, and missionaries supported by local churches.

Gleaves shared a story told by Shana Harrison, a GBGM missionary in Santiago, Chile, with roots in the NC Conference, of a young man in Chile named Alain. Harrison told of the time Alain, who has Down Syndrome, "began to move with the Spirit" to the song "Turn Your Eyes

Upon Jesus."

Harrison related to Gleaves that she had learned developmental psychology, but came to recognize it's incomplete as a way of understand Alain or anyone else because it excludes the Spirit.

Harrison also had told of "the Golden Girls of La Esperanza." Laura, Adriana and Edith are developmentally disabled adults in the group home of La Esperanza. Harrison serves as an advocate for the women, promoting independence and dignity.

Gleaves said mission should be contextual and preserve deeply local culture, flavor and texture. The missionary suitcase should be filled with questions rather than answers, she said.

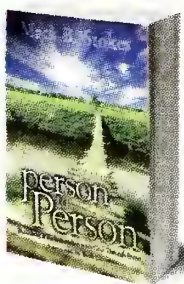
She described "Playday" in Cameroon, a type of Bible program that reaches out to children through singing, crafts, storytelling, and sharing their personal journey with God.

Gleaves passed on a story that Mary Zigbuo and Rev. Herbert Zigbuo, who live and work in Liberia, had told about a young man they called "peanut boy."

Mary Zigbuo recalled that he and

See "Edith Gleaves," page 11

## Books for Local Church Ministries from Plowpoint Press



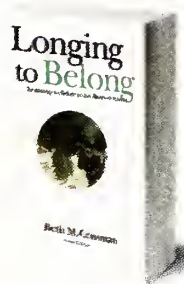
### **person to Person:**

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Regular price: \$9.95\*



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## Publishing House can't contribute

By Reggie Ponder, Jr. \*

For the first time in more than six decades, the United Methodist Publishing House was unable to make a contribution to Annual Conferences for pensions.

This year, instead of a check presentation, Dr. Carl Frazier, superintendent of the Elizabeth City District and a Publishing House board member, explained how the Publishing House is coping with tough times: Curtailing expenses for board meetings, reducing travel, closing two stores, suspending the hymnal revision project.

"We still believe we have a bright future," Frazier said, offering an encouraging word to the conference.

Contributions to the conferences are based on the number of pension claimants in each conference. This year the contribution wasn't possible because the Publishing House lost money.

For more than a quadrennium, NCC has donated its Publishing House pension check to the Central Conference Pension Initiative which provides pension support for Central Conference pastors.

During this year's conference, a video was shown highlighting the sacrifices and hardship of Central Conference pastors and the importance of the Central Conference Pension Initiative. Some \$20 million is needed for the initiative. About \$15 million has been received so far in contributions and pledges.

More information on the initiative is available at [www.ccpimc.org](http://www.ccpimc.org).

Frazier explained the Raleigh Cokesbury store is always one of the top three stores and has been the top-performing store several times.

Cindy Keen, manager of the Raleigh Cokesbury store, reported on "Cokesbury Cares," a program that provides "core resources" to new congregations and assists congregations after disasters.

\* The Rev. Reggie Ponder, Jr. is pastor of Perkins UMC in Shawboro and staff writer for The Daily Advance in Elizabeth City.



(L-R) Neal Wingfield, Doug Jessee, Page Wingfield, Beverly Jessee, Quinton Covington, Dufrene Cummings, Libby Harbin, Karen Covington, Peggy Cummings, Hal Harbin, Mary Ellen Bender, Charles Herring (in back) Walter Graves (seated in front), Betty Nethercutt, Wanda Herring, Claude Nethercutt, Ron Rivenbark (in back), Cindy Rivenbark, Bill Cottingham (kneeling in front), Karen Page, Jack Page, Rose Conner, James Caviness, Jacking Caviness (seated in front), Sandra Nanney, Keith Nanney, Jo-Ann Williams, and Jim Williams. (Photo by Bill Norton)

## Churches have opportunity to embody human-God-land triad says Hackney at Bible study

By Reggie Ponder, Jr. \*

The Rev. Grace Hackney led early morning Bible students at annual conference in biblical reflections on land and food.

Hackney, pastor of Cedar Grove UMC in the Burlington District, taught the Thursday morning study on "From Creation to New Creation."

Instead of exploring just one or two passages, she offered hearers "a taste of a lot of different scriptures that have been keeping me up at night." She shared two competing images of the church given by God in the night:

- ♦ The church as a grapevine on a trellis shaped like a cross, with deep roots in the ground. The branches "twine around the arms of the cross" with huge bunches of grapes.
- ♦ The church as a box of raisins, contained in a box, lumped together, unable to reproduce. The raisins are still sweet and give a short-lived burst of energy, but have no hope that they will ever become grapes again.

"There is no way that this raisin is ever going to produce any fruit," Hackney said.

A backdrop to the study was her own experience at Cedar Grove with community gardening and the congregation's prophetic witness around issues of land, food, justice and reconciliation. She ranged over a varied landscape of Old Testament texts dealing in different ways with land, food and God's providence.

Describing Ezekiel as a priest called to speak hard words to Israel during the Exile, she noted parallels between Ezekiel's world and the world today: Warfare, violence, crime, idolatry.

God is calling those who will speak hard truth, and those voices are often secular rather than in the church, she said. "Our greed is catching up with us," she said.

But the biblical witness teaches that hope comes out of despair, she explained. A grape can't reproduce unless it is broken, she said, and hope is found in God's own brokenness in Christ on the cross.

Christians know that hope comes from God's Spirit, she said.

Hackney pointed out that Ezekiel 36 proclaims God's judgment against Israel's bloodshed and idolatry but also promises that God – "for the sake of his own divine reputation" – says there will be no more famine. The church needs to say this to Haiti, Sudan, and the hungry in its own community, she said.

"The nations will know that God is God by the fertility of the land and because of the people's relationship and care for the land," she said.

For this reason, she said, Christian commitment to eating locally and eating and living green is an authentic Gospel commitment.

Jesus makes possible "communities of sustainability," she said.

The relationship between people, God and land is basic in the Old Testament, she said. The land was to be used for food, to care for the poor and widows.

Hackney said the "bleak current situation" might be centered in a "fundamental disregard for the land" because of "how we read or don't read scripture."

Because the land-human-God triad is "fundamental," the church must address widespread hunger, poverty, obesity, war, and dependence on fossil

fuels. "Soon we will not be able to feed ourselves," she warned.

She related the account of God's gift of manna to the Israelites in Exodus 16 to the twin contemporary crises of hunger and obesity, in which some die of over-feeding while others perish from under-feeding.

"The litmus test of obedience that God gave the Israelites was based on how they would gather and distribute their food," she said. They were to depend on God – neighbor helping neighbor.

"An economy of abundance can only happen in community," Hackney said. Likewise, in the New Testament, Jesus made five loaves and two fishes enough for everyone, she pointed out. Eucharist re-enacts "the table rules of God's reign," she said.

Rural churches have a clear opportunity to embody the human-God-land triad, she said.

\* The Rev. Reggie Ponder, Jr. is pastor of Perkins UMC in Shawboro and staff writer for The Daily Advance in Elizabeth City.



Rev. Grace Hackney



## "Learning" theme developed through five evening workshops

By Reggie Ponder, Jr. \*

In keeping with the "learning" theme, the 2009 annual conference featured a choice of five workshops on Thursday evening for conference members and others interested in growing as Christian disciples.

"This is more than exciting," Bishop Al Gwinn told conference members after hearing a preview of the workshops by the Rev. Carol Goehring, Conference director of connectional ministries.

The workshops covered topics related to mission and discipleship:

- ♦ "Reaching and Transforming the Lives of a New Generation," led by the Rev. Marty Cauley;
- ♦ "Mission: Possible, Transforming Existing Congregations," led by the Dr. Reggie Ponder;
- ♦ "Where Does that Conference Money Go?" led by Emily Innes and Christine Dodson;
- ♦ "Web Presence, Web Schmesence: Why Do I Need One of Those?" led by Derek Leek and Douglas Ward;
- ♦ "Mining for Conflict," led by Beth Crissman of Plowpoint Consulting Services.

The Rev. Anne Walker Sims, associate pastor at Ann Street UMC in Beaufort, said the Web workshop offered practical information for churches.

"Derek and Doug did a great job of helping introduce content-driven websites, and empowering churches to develop their own using user-friendly and intuitive platforms like Blogger and WordPress," Sims said.

She has been blogging for about two and a half years and has thought that blog platforms could serve as great websites for smaller churches.

"I am most familiar with Blogger, where my blog is hosted, but have been playing around with a WordPress site just to get more familiar with



The Rev. Beth Crissman, executive director of Shepherd of the Vision Plowpoint, Inc., in her class "Skills for Healthy Storming: How to Navigate Safely through Conflict."

it," Sims said. "Because Ann Street has a website run by a very capable web administrator, I don't anticipate revamping the church's site. However, my blog is linked there, and I'm encouraged by the possibilities open to us for content-rich and interactive web content, and by how much easier and less intimidating it can be to have a good quality, easily updated website for a church of any size."

Ray and Carol Pridgen, lay members from Rainbow UMC in the Greenville District, attended the 'reaching a new generation' workshop.

Ray Pridgen said the church has gotten caught up in what worked 40 years ago.

"The older people of the church - including us - are going to have to learn to accept young people in the church the way they are," said Carol Pridgen. "We're going to have to go out and reach them and not expect them to come to us." Gain confidence of the generation.

"We've got to offer something that's relevant to them," she said. "It was inspiring. We talked about it all the way home," she said.

Perry Stewart, a lay member from the Mount Zion-Wall's Chapel Charge in the Rockingham District, attended the workshop on "conference money."

He said he appreciated learning more about where the money is going and "how we serve the world."

"Through the presentation I see the need for the collections and the need for our unity in sharing what we have coming in, what God provides," he said.

Stewart said apportioned funds align with the church's mission.

"Our mission is to support those who are less fortunate, educate for the future and give some kind of hope for the people in despair," he said.

Stewart said he can share information with his home church.

"I can better explain to them how our money is really being spent, how it is calculated, help them see that it's not just numbers being gathered up."

Stewart called the workshop a "very good" experience.

"I really got a good opportunity to get a good understanding of what's going on," he said.

Stewart is the chairman of the Finance Committee at his church.

Questions from other workshop participants helped him with his own concerns, he said.

Stewart said the presenters' explanation was helpful.

"The instructors here were very informative," Stewart said. He added he had attended other workshops on apportioned giving but had never found it to be as clear or in-depth.

The Rev. Mike Davis described the workshop from Plowpoint Ministries as "very helpful."

Davis said the workshop "spoke of a cycle of forming, storming, norming, and performing."

The stages in brief:

♦ **Forming** — the time of sharing stories and finding ground when a pastor first arrives;

♦ **Storming** — discovering what is different about one another;

♦ **Norming** — finding a common mission;

♦ **Performing** — working side by side to reach the world for Christ.

The workshop taught that if differences are too great the church can stay in storming mode and not move on, Davis reported.

Performing is the goal in the church. "When all instruments in a band play, even though they are different, when they play in tune, you have a symphony," Davis said.

Jackie Berry, lay member from Camden UMC in Elizabeth City Dis-



Dr. Reggie Ponder, Sr. shared insights on transforming existing congregations.



The Rev. Marty Cauley offered a worship on reaching new generations.

(All photos page 8 by Reggie Ponder, Jr.)

Before the clutter and clang of the holiday season,  
before the shopping lists & trips,  
before you break down on the road to Advent .....  
Come for a time of reflection & preparation, learning to  
welcome God's constant coming into the world.

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See "Five workshops," page 14



## First Time Local Pastors



TO LEFT: (L-R) Shawn Thomas Mitchell, Joseph David Beam IV, Leah Farriba Skaggs, Robert John Clark, Kelli Summers Sorg, Russell Graham Nanney, Jeffrey Scott Nelson, Christi DeSha Dye, Colin Llewellyn Snider, Kjersti Lynne DeVries, Deborah Harris Sutton, James Haywood Henderson, Bertha McArthur Graham, Kelly Mylor Hunt, Craig James Welbaum, James Harvey Galloway III, Bryan Keith Lassiter, George Bruce Skipper, William Matthew Cashion, Jr., Betty Jo Gwaltney Rodgers, Nathan Andrew Wittman, Heather Michele Rodrigues, Timothy Gene Ware, and David Glenn Pate. (Photo by Bill Norton)

## Worldwide, members vote on 32 constitutional amendments

The NC Annual Conference discussed and voted on 32 amendments to the Constitution of The United Methodist Church on June 12 by electronic ballot. The amendments were organized into 5 groupings because many of them were related.

Approved earlier by the delegates to the 2008 United Methodist General Conference, members of the 62 U.S. annual conferences and the 73 conferences in Africa, Europe and Asia will consider the amendments at their meetings.

When all of the Annual and Central Conferences throughout the world have voted, the Council of Bishops will look at the total aggregate vote and certify the totals. The final results may be available by the Spring 2010 Council of Bishops gathering.

All constitutional amendments must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the total number of voting members of all annual conferences worldwide.

The following represents the votes counted for the NC Conference only.

### Group 1

Proposed Constitutional Amendments on the Worldwide Nature of the Church:

Amendment 4	Yes: 154	No: 896
Amendment 10	Yes: 157	No: 892
Amendment 23	Yes: 161	No: 886
Amendment 26	Yes: 156	No: 889

### Group 2

Proposed Constitutional Amendments on the Worldwide Nature of the Church Dealing Primarily with the Name Change:

Amendment 3	Yes: 218	No: 830
Amendment 5	Yes: 218	No: 832
Amendment 7	Yes: 224	No: 823
Amendment 11	Yes: 217	No: 829
Amendment 12	Yes: 218	No: 829
Amendment 13	Yes: 215	No: 835
Amendment 14	Yes: 222	No: 830
Amendment 16	Yes: 224	No: 825
Amendment 18	Yes: 217	No: 816
Amendment 20	Yes: 219	No: 815
Amendment 21	Yes: 218	No: 814
Amendment 24	Yes: 213	No: 821
Amendment 25	Yes: 219	No: 818
Amendment 27	Yes: 214	No: 823
Amendment 28	Yes: 215	No: 820
Amendment 29	Yes: 221	No: 812
Amendment 30	Yes: 220	No: 830
Amendment 31	Yes: 221	No: 829
Amendment 32	Yes: 220	No: 827

### Group 3

A single amendment proposing a change in the language defining the availability of the ministry of the church to all persons:

Amendment: 1	Yes: 237	No: 815
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### Group 4

A single amendment related to who is able to vote for delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences:

Amendment 19	Yes: 634	No: 384
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### Group 5

Contains amendments which are related but may not require extensive dialog:

Amendment: 2	Yes: 297	No: 742
Amendment 6	Yes: 279	No: 758
Amendment 8	Yes: 638	No: 400
Amendment 9	Yes: 644	No: 399
Amendment 15	Yes: 255	No: 784
Amendment 17	Yes: 396	No: 640
Amendment 22	Yes: 700	No: 338



Bruce Allen, chief clergy teller, and Scott Finicum, Burlington District clergy teller, place the ballots for counting., (Photo by Bill Norton)



ABOVE: The Rev. Beth Hood speaks to the conference during the vote on constitutional amendments. Behind her are some members of the conference delegation to General Conference: the Rev. Albert Shuler, Emily Innes, Dr. Carl Frazier, and the Rev. Gray Southern. (Photo by Reggie Ponder, Jr.)

BELOW: The Rev. Dennis Peay (right) feeds ballots into the counter while Anna Workman, chief lay teller, watches the counting progress on the monitor. (Photo by Derek Leek)

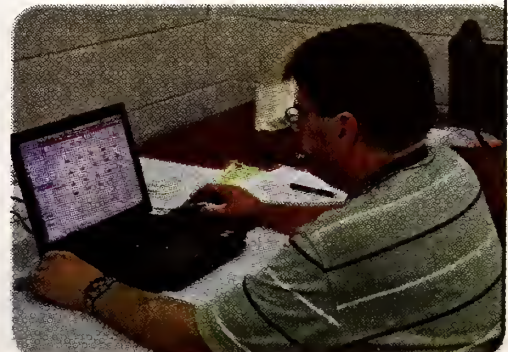


## Annual Conference behind the scenes

Behind the scenes at Annual Conference, a temporary "television station" setup is created each year to coordinate speakers, video presentations, slides, and videotaping of the event to be offered online through streaming technology. The team making it possible includes lay and clergy volunteers and conference staff as well as a professional production crew. The online ministry makes it possible for those unable to attend in person to keep up to date on conference activity. The ministry reached a record number of persons in 2009 who logged on to read about and watch the Conference live.

According to computer records, there were 1,848 views of the live stream, and the average viewer watched for 22 minutes. The Conference blog and new Twitter updates were also popular.

RIGHT: Douglas Ward, conference information technology director prepares files for streaming. (Photo by Derek Leek)







### Ordained Elders in Full Connection

Right to Left: Front row: Rhonda Riggins Parker; Jane Lee Leechford; Pamela Jane Watkins; Julia Ellen Alliger; Bishop Al Gwinn, Karl Franklin Grant; James Elton Wooten; Seong-IL Eom; Rani Partridge Woodrow; Matthew Reeves Ashburn; Second row: Donna Morrisette Banks; Mattheue Brock Locklear; Janet Lea Balasko; Scott Allen Dodson; John Farron Duncan; Sandra Barefoot Schaller; Barbara Elaine Swett; Jeffrey Raymond Nash; Christopher Gregory Moore; Rhonda Turner Maurer; James Dean Whittaker; Third row: Thomas Moore Nichols; Edward Slee New; Woo-IL Lee; Jared Andrew Hanson; Michael David Gira, Jr.; David John Blackman; Charles Conrad Pullins; Stephen Eugene Smith; Charles Michael Coppock; Elmar Karl Neuschaefer (Photos this page by Bill Norton)

## Take hold of God's big dream, bishop encourages at Wednesday's ordination and commissioning service

By Reggie Ponder, Jr. \*

Preaching on Jesus' image of the vine and the branches from John 15, Bishop Al Gwinn encouraged those gathered for the Ordination and Commissioning Service at the 2009 annual conference to take hold of God's big dream for their life and ministry.

During the service on Wednesday, June 10, one person was recognized for associate membership, 17 were commissioned as probationary

members – Elders Track and 30 were ordained as elders in full connection.

The bishop acknowledged the diversity of the audience for the sermon at that service: those being ordained, those being commissioned, those who think the service has nothing to do with them, family members of ordinands and others who have prayed for the occasion to come, and those praying God will speak to everyone at the service and perform a great work in their life.

Gwinn confided he had been in all those groups at one time or another – but insisted that in this instance he was among those praying God would work in every heart.

Noting baptism calls all Christians

to ministry, Gwinn said God is calling laity and clergy alike – including those newly ordained at conference – to move bravely and faithfully “into the midst of these very uncertain times,” facing “breathtaking change in a world that does not understand.”

He admonished his hearers to seek God with all their hearts.

He told the ordinands and those being commissioned they were “hand-picked” by God to take God's message to the world.

But because the church is located amid a “narcissistic, ego-centric, self-absorbed society,” he said it was necessary to clarify that the “hand-picked” aren't the answer and don't have the answer.

It's not about your skills and abilities, he said, but about being guided and led by God in a covenantal partnership with Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

“I'm more convinced than ever that God is not looking for someone with the answer,” Gwinn said.

Instead, God is looking for someone with a relationship with God, he said. John 15:1-8 is all about relationship with God, said Gwinn.

“These verses have the surgings of eternity in them,” calling us to “swim in the unfathomable riches of God's life,” Gwinn said.

God, knowing all about us, prom-

See “God's big dream,” page 11



### Associate Member

Sue Harvey Owens & Bishop Al Gwinn



### Probationary Deacon

Kristina Johnson Yeatts & Bishop Al Gwinn



### Probationary Elders

Right to Left: Front row: Harriett Taylor Bounds, Dalma Garrell Cribbs, Kelli Summers Sorg, John Michael McAllister, Laura Fine Ledford; Bishop Gwinn; Alice Wade Davis; Elizabeth Ann Gaines; Christi DaSha Dye; Carolyn Nancy Roy; Nathan Andrew Wittman; Back row: David Lewis King; James Haywood Henderson; Edward Nicholas Priestaf; Marc Herman Werner; Timothy Davis Catlett; Donald Thomas Miller; Joseph David Beam IV



# "Life is short," but "you and I are here living out the Gospel" preached Lowry at memorial service

By Reggie Ponder, Jr. \*

The Rev. Herbert Lowry, Jr. evoked the brevity of life — and the importance of eternity — in his sermon at the memorial service during the 2009 annual conference.

"Life is short," Lowry said. He mentioned a comment by the Rev. Billy Graham during an interview with Larry King in which Graham said the thing that struck him most powerfully after all his years of ministry was how short life is.

He also quoted Kenny Chesney's country song "Don't Blink" for its commentary on the brevity of life.

"We're never over the death of a loved one," Lowry said.

But he encouraged people to take heart in how their loved ones had lived.

Lowry used the acronym "STORY" to talk about the way the individual stories of those remembered during the service were "part of a greater and grander story."

- S – Service and sacrifice. Those honored gave service to God and realized that greatness is in servanthood. It's a daily decision to recommit to service, he said, even at times when you ask "what in the Sheol am I doing here?"

- T – Thanksgiving. "God is able to take a meager morsel and turn it into



The Memorial Service included a time to light a candle for each deceased clergy or spouse. (Photo by Bill Norton)

a feast," he said.

- O – Obedience. Follow God's commandments with the whole heart. "It's not always easy to follow Christ," Lowry said.

- R – Reverence and righteousness. These traits are needed to confront

materialism, relativism, and a "new profound arrogance among atheists." Reverence is required to lead people to the things of God. The Spirit of God is let loose in the world through the Resurrection of Jesus.

- Y – You and I. "You and I are also here, continuing to live our narrative," he said. "The Gospel is being documented in each and every one of our lives."

He said "we can't live somebody else's story" but have an example in those who have gone before.

Lowry said there's "something at stake" – a Hell to shun and a Heaven to take — and added "Heaven is Heaven because Jesus is there."

\* The Rev. Reggie Ponder, Jr. is pastor of Perkins UMC in Shawboro and staff writer for The Daily Advance in Elizabeth City.

## God's big dream from page 10

ises that we will bear fruit as we abide in Christ, Gwinn said.

Christians are called into community together with God and individually with God, Gwinn said.

"We are to abide together," he said, stressing the importance of being in community with other Christians while seeking deeper communion with God.

Borrowing a phrase from author Leonard Sweet, Gwinn said today's church crisis stems from "a Jesus deficit disorder."

Gwinn said the Christian commu-

nity must long for communion with Jesus.

He told the ordinands that God's dream for them is much greater than any dream they might dream for themselves. "Surrender your dream and claim God's dream," Gwinn said.

Even the bishop and district superintendent can't get in the way of God's dream, he said.

"You can trust God," Gwinn said.

\* The Rev. Reggie Ponder, Jr. is pastor of Perkins UMC in Shawboro and staff writer for The Daily Advance in Elizabeth City.

## Edith Gleaves from page 6

his brother had sold peanuts as children and struggled like many other children in Liberia. She remembered bringing him pencils for school. Later, she saw him after he had become a university student. He showed her pamphlets he had made as a student in mass communications.

There's no place in the world where God's light doesn't shine, Gleaves

said. Following Christ, the Conference's future can only be bright, she said. "I'm totally unbiased when I say 'this is the best Annual Conference in The United Methodist Church,'" said Gleaves.

\* The Rev. Reggie Ponder, Jr. is pastor of Perkins UMC in Shawboro and staff writer for The Daily Advance in Elizabeth City.

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# Acts 2 Congregations honored for radical hospitality, passionate worship, intentional spiritual formation, risk-taking mission & ministry

Eighty congregations across the North Carolina Conference received certification as "2009 ACTS 2 Churches" for demonstrating health and vitality through Radical Hospitality, Passionate Worship, Intentional Spiritual Formation, and Risk-Taking Mission and Ministry to the World.

The churches were announced on Thursday during Annual Conference. This is the second year churches have received the designation.

Every church in the Conference was given the opportunity to be considered for this special recognition.

For a church to receive the designation this year they had to complete an application which first went to representatives of their District Board of Laity.

Churches selected in each district were sent to representatives of the Conference Board of Laity for final selection. Churches receiving the designation at last year needed to re-apply to be considered for the 2009 designation.

The "ACTS 2" designation was introduced by Bishop Al Gwinn in his 2006 State of the Church Address.

Churches selected for 2009 needed to demonstrate that they are:

- Making a real difference in passion for Christ and depth of service and witness to and with the community.
- Growing in deeper faithfulness, in membership, and in profession of faith
- Fully supportive of congregational giving
- Congregations whose health and vitality is reflected in four key descriptors -radical, passionate, intentional, risk-taking- while honoring the local context for ministry.

By districts, the following churches

received "ACTS 2" certification:

## Burlington District

Carrboro  
Union Grove

## Durham District

Epworth  
McMannen  
Warren's Grove

## Elizabeth City District

Duck  
First UMC, Elizabeth City  
Mighty Wind  
Moyock  
Mt. Zion

## Fayetteville District

Camp Ground  
Erwin - Parkers Grove Charge  
First, Clinton  
Harry Hosier  
Haymount  
Salem  
Solid Rock  
Spring Hill  
St. Matthews  
Wesley Chapel

## Goldsboro District

Benson  
Centenary, Smithfield  
Faison  
Greater Heights  
St. Paul

## Greenville District

Covenant  
Salem  
St. James, Greenville  
Trinity, Belhaven  
Trinity, Kinston

## New Bern District

New Song  
St. Peter's  
Swansboro

## Raleigh District

All Saints'  
Apex  
Bunn  
Fuquay-Varina  
Garner  
Genesis  
Hayes Barton  
Highland  
Holland's  
Knightdale  
Millbrook  
Wake Forest  
White Plains

## Rockingham District

First, Laurinburg  
Jerusalem  
St. Pauls  
Trinity, Fairmont

## Rocky Mount District

Jackson  
Nashville

## Sanford District

Doubs Chapel  
First, Troy

Meroney  
Roseland  
Southern Pines  
West End

## Wilmington District

Andrews Chapel  
Bethel  
Bethlehem  
Camp  
Concord  
Grace  
Live Oak  
Ocean View  
Oleander  
Pine Valley  
Rocky Point  
Seaside  
Sharon  
St. Paul  
Trinity, Southport  
Village Point  
Wesleyan Chapel  
Wesley Memorial  
Windsor  
Wrightsboro  
Wrightsville



The Rev. Gypsie Murdaugh, pastor of Jerusalem UMC in the Rockingham District, gives testimony to the transforming power of God in new ministries during the Celebration and Sending Forth: A Feast and Fountain of Love and Grace (Photo by Taylor Mills)

## Church Mice

Karl Zorowski



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# Pastoral appointments for 2009-10 include 161 changes

By LeeAnne Thornton \*

Bishop Al Gwinn announced the appointments of approximately 900 clergy members of the North Carolina Conference on June 13. A total of 161 changes were made for the year. A list of all appointments, new and continuing, is available on the Conference Web site, <http://nccumc.org/annual-conference/>. Clergy are appointed for one year and can be reappointed to the same location or be reassigned by the bishop.

## District Superintendent & pastoral assignment changes

The Rev. Francis Daniel, previously the pastor at Wesley Memorial UMC in Wilmington, was appointed the Wilmington District Superintendent.

The Rev. Jonathan Strother, previously the pastor at Benson Memorial UMC in Raleigh, was appointed the Raleigh district superintendent.

The present Raleigh district superintendent, the Rev. Timothy J. Russell, was appointed Assistant to the Bishop and Director of Ministerial Relations.

Following are other pastoral changes as announced by Bishop Gwinn:

## BURLINGTON DISTRICT

Alamance, Caswell, and Orange counties

The Rev. William H. Gattis, district superintendent

Chapel Hill Christ associate, Christi D. Dye, new pastor; Orange, E. Kenneth Hall, Jr. from Mebane; Orange associate, Nancy Johnston Varden from Cary; St. Francis associate; Eno, Brenda A. Davis from BU: Carr; Evergreen, Donna M. Banks from Chapel Hill Christ associate; Fairview, Nathan Wittman, new pastor; Friendship, Henry Swanzey from Warsaw; Mebane, Bryan W. Faggart from DU; Bethany; New Sharon, Jeffrey R. Nash from Evergreen; Orange Chapel, Carl D. Belcher from New Sharon; and Union Grove, full deacon Andrew Keck.

## DURHAM DISTRICT

Durham, Granville, Person, and Vance counties

The Rev. H. Gray Southern, district superintendent

Butner: Community, Dwayne D. Alston from FA: John Wesley; Concord, Karl Neuschaefer from Butner: Community; Creedmoor, Jonathan D. Jeffries from RA: Edenton Street associate; DU: Aldersgate, W. Douglas Lain, Jr. from Wendell; DU: Bethany, James T. Weaver, Jr. from Snow Hill: Calvary; DU: Carr, Roberta Gail Byram from RA: Hayes Barton associate; DU: Cristo Vive, Roger Valesquez from another conference; DU: Duke's Chapel, Julia Ellen Alliger from Eno; DU: Epworth, Hope A. Vickers from Whiteville; DU: Glendale Heights, Adam D. Brinkley from GO: Hickory Grove; DU: Trinity associate, Jaylynn Byassee; Fletcher's Chapel, Ronald J. Snider from DU: Glendale Heights; Granville-Vance charge, Christopher C. Diggs, student pastor; Massey's Chapel, Susan Harris White from DU: Bethesda; Middleburg-Hermon, Brian Keithline, student pastor; Rehobeth, Joshua Duckworth, student pastor; Rougemont; Cheryl Lawrence from DU: Carr; Union Chapel, Dennis Gossett, student pastor.

## ELIZABETH CITY DISTRICT

Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Hertford, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Tyrrell, and Washington counties

The Rev. R. Carl Frazier, Jr., district superintendent

Anderson, Warren Stackhouse, part-time local pastor; EC: Riverside, Shawn

Blackwelder from WI: Fifth Avenue; Grace, Berry Taylor from an extension ministry position; Kitty Hawk associate, Colin Snider; Mount Hermon, Kathy Clark-Dickens, from a leave of absence; Pilmoor Memorial, Randy C. Blanchard from Fellowship/St. Paul; Wanchese: Bethany, G. Jerome Smith from Tabor City: St. Paul.

## FAYETTEVILLE DISTRICT

Cumberland, Harnett, Hoke, and Sampson counties

The Rev. Samuel Wynn, district superintendent

Angier, Duane R. Partin from Orange Chapel; Bethany, Robert A. Faircloth from FA: Johnson Memorial; Black's Chapel, Rich Cooper, interim supply; Coats, J. Anthony Joyner from Goshen-Keener; Cotton, Michael L. Hale, retired supply; FA: Camp Ground, Albert Shuler from GR: Jarvis Memorial; FA: Christ-Trinity, Robert D. O'Keef from SA: St. Luke; FA: Culbreth-Johnson Memorial, Gregory L. McGarvey from Culbreth; FA: Hay Street associate, Donna Fowler-Marchant from Cotton; FA: John Wesley, Richard C. Jackson from Hoke Charge; FA: Person Street, Donna Fowler-Marchant from Cotton; FA: Victory, Michael Paul Smith, part-time local pastor; Goshen-Keener, Diane M. Christiansen from GR: Jarvis Memorial associate; Harnet: Cokesbury, Jeff Nelson, part-time local pastor; Solid Rock associate, Donna Thompson from Hamlet: St. Peter; Marvin, William H. Altman, Jr. from Riegelwood: Wesley; Stedman: Cokesbury, Michael N. Nelson from Robbins: Tabernacle; Wesley Chapel, J. Alexander Maulsby III from Williston-Stacey.

## GOLDSBORO DISTRICT

Duplin, Johnston, Lenoir, Wayne, and Wilson counties

The Rev. Charles M. Cook, district superintendent

Bethel (Wayne Co.), Woo-IL Lee from Northampton; Ebenezer (Wayne Co.), David Pate, part-time local pastor; Eureka, Chuck Herrin from RM: Zion; Falling Creek, Robert Clark, part-time local pastor; Friendship-Unity, J. Craig Langston from Falling Creek; GO: New Hope, Todd S. Krueger from Zebulon; GO: St. Paul, James H. Harry from RA: Trinity; St. Paul associate, Elizabeth Gaines from Sarecta-Wesley Chapel; GO: Salem, Seong-IL Eom from Norlina; Hickory Grove, Norma Walters, interim supply; Magnolia, Jerry Sheffield, interim supply; Rose Hill, Leah Skaggs; Rose Hill pastor emeritus, Reginald Ponder, Sr.; Sarecta-Wesley Chapel, Debbie Sutton, part-time local pastor; Saulston, Carolyn K. Sims from an appointment in another conference; Selma: Edgerton Memorial, Richard L. Ward from Saulston; Seven Springs, Phyllis Vail, interim supply; Warsaw, Robert A. Hagerty from Creedmoor.

## GREENVILLE DISTRICT

Beaufort, Craven, Edgecombe, Greene, Hyde, Lenoir, Martin, and Pitt counties

The Rev. Elizabeth Hackney Hood, district superintendent

Campbell's Creek, George A. Jones, retired supply; GR: Jarvis Memorial, Homer E. Morris from GO: St. Pauls; Hart-Speight, J. David Amon from Warren Charge; Jamesville-Siloam, Janine T. Youngstrom, interim supply; Robersonville, Brenda Marlowe, interim supply; Salem full deacon, Brigitte Freeman Morris; Snow Hill: Calvary, R. Martin Armstrong from GO: New Hope; Soule, Jerald Craddock, part-time local pastor.

## NEW BERN DISTRICT

Carteret, Craven, Jones, Onslow, and Pamlico counties

The Rev. Dennis M. Goodwin, district superintendent

Harlowe-Oak Grove, Daniel P. Jones, from Wilson: First associate; Haw Branch, Betty Rodgers, part-time local; Jacksonville: Pine Valley, Thurman J. Horney from GO: St. Paul associate; Jacksonville: Trinity, Karen C. Howell from Harlowe-Oak Grove; Marshallberg-Smyrna, Douglas Wagner from Rougemont; Oriental, Curtis Keith Sexton from RM: St. Paul; Riverdale, John M. Eubanks from Jacksonville: Pine Valley; Williston-Stacey, Doug Stewart, retired supply; Water's Edge (new church start), T. Lamont Hemminger II.

## RALEIGH DISTRICT

Franklin, Johnston, and Wake counties

The Rev. Jonathan Strother, district superintendent

Apex, E. Powell Osteen, Jr. from Wilmington district superintendent; Calvary, Richard L. Hartman, retired from another conference; Cary: St. Francis associate, Gloria Winston Harris from extension ministry position; Ebenezer-Wesley, James H. Galloway III, part-time local pastor; Leah's Chapel-Shiloh, Stanley Gallagher-Smith from Wendell associate; RA: Benson Memorial, Samuel A. (Skip) Williams from Southport: Trinity; RA: Benson Memorial deacon, Kristina John-

## DBOM training is Aug. 22

Aug. 22 is the statewide training and re-certification event for all Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries (DBOM) volunteers in both the adult and juvenile settings. The event will take place from 10am - 4pm at Jamestown UMC near Greensboro (403 E. Main Street, Jamestown, NC 27282). Lunch is provided.

Re-certification event is required for all current and new volunteers. Persons wishing to learn more about the ministry are also welcome and encouraged to attend. For those unable to make the Aug. 22 training, a small make-up event has been scheduled for Sept. 12 at Jamestown UMC. Every effort will be made to certify persons wishing to maintain their volunteer status.

Make reservations online to [www.disciplebibleoutreach.org](http://www.disciplebibleoutreach.org). Click the "Make online reservations" link on the homepage. Confirmation e-mails are sent after reservations are received. Phone in a reservation to the DBOM office at 336-454-5348. Deadline for registration is Monday, Aug. 17. Please call the DBOM office with any questions or concerns.







## Conference Headquarters Groundbreaking

Groundbreaking for the new United Methodist Building was held May 29 on the property where the new building will be located, Waterfield Ridge Place in Garner. Participating in the service were (L-R) Cashar Evans, chair of the Conference Board of Trustees; Bishop Al Gwinn; Melba McCallum, vice chair of the Board of Trustees; and Christine Dodson, conference treasurer. (Photo by Bill Norton)

## Five workshops from page 8

trict, attended the workshop "Mission Possible: Transforming Existing Congregations."

"The main gist of it was 'if you keep your eyes fixed on Jesus you're going to succeed,'" she said. Presenters suggested that congregations ask four questions: 1. What do you believe God is telling you to do? 2. What does the

Bible say?, 3. What are the community's needs?, 4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the congregation? "That's something that I think could be used in any church," Berry said.

\* The Rev. Reggie Ponder, Jr. is pastor of Perkins UMC in Shawboro and staff writer for The Daily Advance in Elizabeth City.

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## Changes continued from page 13

### ROCKINGHAM DISTRICT continued

son Yeatts; RA: Edenton Street associate, Lisa Naa-Shormey Yebuah from RA: Millbrook associate; RA: Hayes Barton associate, Laura Fine Ledford; RA: Millbrook associate, Heather Michele Rodrigues; RA: Trinity, Richard L. Bryant from Marshallberg-Smyrna; Wendell, Ellen Margaret McCubbin from Seaside associate; Zebulon, Kenneth Leroy Davenport from Aberdeen: Page Memorial.

### ROCKINGHAM DISTRICT

Richmond, Robeson, and Scotland counties

The Rev. Leonard E. Fairley, district superintendent

Cordova, James R. Hines from Chadbourn-Evergreen; Fairmont, Trinity-Olivet: Emily Davis, part-time local pastor; Hamlet: Fellowship, M. Eugene Tyson, retired supply; Hamlet: St. Peter, Angelo M. Troy from Rhyne Memorial; Laurel Hill, Lamar Smith, retired supply from another denomination; Laurinburg: Central, Robert Floyd Dean, retired from another denomination; Lumberton: Mt. Olive, Bertha Graham, part-time local pastor; Lumberton Circuit, G. Bruce Skipper, part-time local pastor; Maxton: St. Paul's, Ann Giles Benson from Lumberton Circuit; Mt. Zion-Wall's Chapel, Shawn Mitchell, part-time local pastor; Pembroke: First, Terry Hunt from Coats; Rhyne Memorial, Vermel Taylor from Lumberton: Mt. Olive; Rockingham: First, R. Michael Sykes from Siler City: First; Rockingham: Pee Dee, Michael Griffin from Little River-Melton Grove; Rockingham: St. Paul, James Hinson, interim supply; West Rockingham, Donald Dawkins, retired supply; St. John-Gibson, Kelly Hunt, part-time local pastor.

### ROCKY MOUNT DISTRICT

Edgecombe, Halifax, Nash, Northampton, Warren, and Wilson counties

The Rev. Samuel D. McMillan III, district superintendent

Bethlehem-Shady Grove, Kjersti DeVries, part-time local pastor; Gaston, Larry Michael Chandler from West Rockingham; Hawkins-Tabor, Sidney Alton Collins from Milwaukee Charge; Hornes, D. Thomas Miller from St. John-Gibson; Jackson, Warren T. Heitzenrater from EC: Mount Hermon; Milwaukee Charge, Edward Raymond Drew from Eureka; Mt. Pleasant, Craig J. Welbaum, part-time local pastor; Norlina, Roderic L. Mullen from Marvin; Rehoboth, Daniel T. Earnhardt, retired supply; RM: Englewood, David C. Benson from Seaside; RM: First associate, Joseph David Beam IV, new pastor; RM: St. Paul, Marty Cauley from extension ministry position; Sims, Barbara High Tyre, part-time local pastor; Trinity Parish, James H. Hayes from Riverdale; Warren Charge, Eric Schubert, student pastor; Wilson: First, D. Ray Warren, Jr. from Orange; Wilson First associate, Russell Graham Nanney, new pastor; Zion, Robert D. Rose from Hawkins-Tabor.

### SANFORD DISTRICT

Chatham, Lee, Montgomery, and Moore counties

The Rev. Stephen C. Compton, district superintendent

Aberdeen: Page Memorial, Jane Leechford from Aberdeen: Page Memorial associate; Broadway-Morris Chapel, J. H. Daniels from Soule; Candor-Little River, Patricia S. Sykes from Chatham/ Cedar Grove; Center, Chris Humphreys from FA: Victory-Person Street; Chatham/Cedar Grove, Patrick Sinclair from Singletary; Robbins: Tabernacle, Michael D. Weber from Fletcher's Chapel; SA: St. Luke, A. Gene Cobb, Jr. from DU: Epworth; SA: Trinity (new church), Bruce E. Petty; Siler City: First, Clyde A Denny from WI: Grace.

### WILMINGTON DISTRICT

Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, New Hanover, and Pender counties

The Rev. Francis Daniel, district superintendent

Chadbourn-Evergreen, Milford Oxendine, Jr. from Cordova; Clarkton Circuit, James Bliss from Oleander-Devon Park associate; Jordan's Chapel, John Barnes from Clarkton; Riegelwood: Wesley, Deborah Wilkins from Candor; Seaside co-pastor, Scott Wilson-Parsons from Pilmoor Memorial; Seaside co-pastor, Mary Jane Wilson-Parsons from extension ministry position; Singletary, David E. Heath from Hornes-Sims; Southport: Trinity, Jeffrey L. Roberts from WI: Trinity; Tabor City: St. Paul, John Farron Duncan from RM: First associate; Whiteville, William A. Boykin from Concord; WI: Fifth Avenue, Neal Wingfield, retired supply; WI: Grace, Scott Dodson from Wilson: First associate; WI: Devon Park, William Pearsall, Sr., from Jordan's Chapel; WI: Pine Valley associate, Jared Hanson from Fairview; WI: Trinity, Michael A. Davis from Angier; and WI: Wesley Memorial, David C. Wade from FA: Camp Ground.

\* LeeAnne Thornton is on the NCC Christian Advocate staff and is administrative assistant in communications.



# Youth seed grant project gives NC Conference teens a way "to do something to help" orphan children in Africa

By Heidi Robinson \*

"People don't realize what is happening in the world," says 15-year-old Jessica Rea. "When we heard about what is happening in Africa, we wanted to do something to help."

Youth from seven UM churches have been raising money and awareness to help orphan children in Africa through ZOE Ministry's Giving Hope Seed Grant Project.

Participating groups include Harbor UMC, Wilmington; Pine Valley UMC, Wilmington; Christ Community UMC, Clayton; Philadelphia UMC from Fort Mill, SC; First UMC, Wilson; Soapstone UMC, Raleigh; and Mebane UMC, Mebane.

"We wanted to give youth in the United States a chance to learn about the ZOE Ministry empowerment program in a hands-on way," says Susan Graebe, assistant director of ZOE Ministry.

"We developed our Giving Hope Seed Grant Project for two reasons: One, so youth in the United States could have an opportunity to impact the lives of AIDS orphans and two, so teens here can experience what children in our program in Africa actually go through when they receive their grants," she said.

## Young entrepreneurs

Inside Soapstone UMC in Raleigh, middle and high school students, along with adult volunteers, pack a large church conference room where a cottage industry triumphs during an economic downturn.

"Here's how it works," explains Caitlin Fanning, a high school junior. "The congregation brings in a T-shirt they love, maybe it's from a sports team, an event, or place they visited. They pay us. And, we turn their T-shirt into a pillow."

The young entrepreneurs gathered at the church have actually thrown themselves and their talents into a successful business operation and are turning a profit.

"Whatever I can do to help children who have lost their parents, I'm in," says Pierce Fussell, a high school student.

At this makeshift business site, teens and parents operate cutting tables, sewing stations and a stuffing area, turning out almost 200 pillows.

"I cannot believe we've raised more than \$2,000!" exclaims a high-school

sophomore as she cuts a T-shirt in a pillow pattern.

The Philadelphia Youth raised nearly \$2,500 with a variety of business ventures including selling, packaging, and shipping T-shirts for ZOE Ministry. "We're helping families rebuild what they thought they'd lost," calls a tall teenager as she tapes a box full of T-shirts.

In Wilmington, youth groups raised money with a variety of activities including a car show and music concert at Pine Valley UMC and bookmarks and sponsorships at Harbour UMC.

On behalf of ZOE, youth in Mebane bartered one of their most precious commodities to raise money: free time. They raised money with a

talent auction, selling blocks of time for baby-sitting, yard work and other skilled labor.

At Christ Community UMC in Clayton, youth sold car art, inspired by forgotten fast food bags.

In Wilson, youth from First UMC planned a fully day of activities including a pancake breakfast, a silent auction of talents, and a parents' night out.

Their efforts raised \$4,000 — the equivalent of support for five households of vulnerable children for their entire three years in the Empowerment Project.

## Seed Grants bring hope

Each of the teen-led businesses started with a \$100 grant from ZOE Ministry and the Seed Grant Project.

"We gave \$100 seed money grants to demonstrate the way in which we give grants to orphan family groups in Africa so they may start their own businesses," explains Graebe.



Youth from Mebane UMC hosted a ZOE Festival and raised enough funds to support three full households of vulnerable children for their 3 years in the Giving Hope Empowerment Project.



Youth from First UMC in Wilson, NC created an ark and gave people in their community an opportunity to purchase dinner and make donations toward animals and seeds for the children in ZOE's Giving Hope Empowerment Project.

"The difference is that these kids are using their businesses and profits to help buy garden seeds for AIDS orphans on the other side of the world — kids they may never see."

In all, this first group of Seed Grants could raise \$10,000. The project could expand to include help from youth groups in other states.

"Now, we have other churches and groups requesting opportunities to participate," says Graebe. "We are developing curriculum that organizations can use for a variety of purposes, from vacation Bible school to high school."

Groups interested in participating in the program can email [info@zoeministry.org](mailto:info@zoeministry.org) for details.

## Giving Hope Empowerment Project

ZOE Ministry, led by the Rev. Greg Jenks, began empowerment work as an expansion of the ministry's origins offering food relief and medical care.

Orphans in Zimbabwe and Zambia are also in ZOE's care.

The Giving Hope Empowerment Project shares the love of Christ and teaches children life-skills necessary to be self-sufficient and eliminate lifetimes of dependence on outside relief programs.

The program was developed by Epiphany Mujawimana in Rwanda and has expanded to include child-led families in Kenya as well.

Participants in Giving Hope learn to grow their own food, build their own businesses, and receive training in areas such as health, hygiene, and AIDS prevention.

"It takes about \$300 to fund a family group in the program for a year," explains Graebe.

"The average family is made up of five children, working together to survive. The funds these North Carolina kids raise will help buy garden seeds, malaria nets. It will help purchase farm animals and it may even help buy sewing machines so children in Africa can start their own sewing businesses."

One of the young entrepreneurs and pillow makers in Raleigh explains the success and passion behind the teen-run businesses.

"When it's not about making money, when it's about making the world a better place, I think you will get a much better return than you can ever expect," says William Graebe.

\* Heidi Robinson is a freelance producer based near Cleveland, Tenn.

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By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

## August 2, 2009

**Text: Numbers 11:1-6, 10-15**  
**"People Grumble"**

If ever I am tempted to imagine that the people of the Bible are somehow super-spiritual, somehow beyond the ebb and flow of regular life, I need only read this week's study text. Not only the people in general (Numbers 11:1), not only "the rabble among them" (Numbers 11:4), but also their larger-than-life leader, Moses, offers his own displeasure at how the Lord is handling the exodus from Egypt (Numbers 11:11).

This is not a one-time blip on the screen.

The sense of the Hebrew verb translated "complained" (11:1) is that it is an action that was repeated over and over again.

It is like a child who asks repeatedly: "Are we there yet?" "Are we there yet?" "Are we there yet?" "Are we there yet?" "Are we there yet?" Well, you get the idea.

For me, the remarkable thing about these verses is not that the people were whining. The remarkable thing is how God responds to this constant complaining.

At first, God got angry (11:1), but then God backed off a little (11:2). But the real power is seen in some verses that are not included in the study text. Look at Numbers 11:16-25. Moses had complained about having the whole load of leadership himself, so God spreads the spirit of leader upon seventy others. Look at

Numbers 11:31-35. The people had complained about the monotony of eating manna all the time, so God provided filet mignon. (Well, it was actually quail piled up about a yard high, but for all purposes it might as well have been filet mignon!)

Is the point of all this to teach us that if we nag God long enough, God will eventually cave in and do what we want? No. What I learn from this is that life is sustained by grace, that undeserved gift from God. It is not my grumbling that releases God's prevailing care.

In some strange way, God's gracious gifts do not stop my complaining. Alas, the more I have, the more I want. (Moses was a good leader, but he wanted help. Israel had food to eat, but wanted variety in the diet.)

My complaints form a dramatic backdrop against which God's generosity stands in contrast. Maybe that's not a bad thing to learn: a contrast between God and me.

God is God and I am not.

### What Someone Else Has Said:

In *The Case of a Middle Class Christian* (Word Books), Charles Merrill Smith wrote: "And whenever I get to thinking I have missed it, that maybe my lack of religious feelings means I am an unregenerate, I recall that Martin Luther, a man who had a lot of trouble with this problem himself, once said, 'We depend on the unseen, unfelt and unknown goodness of God.'"

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Before I called Your name, oh Lord, You knew me and claimed me and gave me grace for life.

Forgive my plea for You to overstock my plate at the expense of others..."

## August 9, 2009

**Text: Numbers 14:1-25**  
**"People Rebel"**

That delightful puppet, Kermit, the Frog, used to say, "It's not easy being green." That memory came to mind when I read this week's study texts. "It's not easy being God." Here God had delivered the Hebrews from slavery, stayed with them through thick and thin as they journeyed across the desert, and waits with them as they prepare to take hold of the Promised Land. And they decide they don't want to risk going into this new territory. Talk about leading a horse to water!

God had a plan for God's people. And the people rebelled (Numbers 14:2-3). They were ready to desert the God who had been faithful for the forty years in the wilderness.

Be careful what you pray for. They decided against God and said they did not want to enter the Promised Land. They got their wish. They died in the wilderness (Numbers 14:29-30). Only their children and those who did not complain got to enter the Promised Land (Numbers 14:30-31).

The future can be frightening. How are we to deal with matters when our leaders want to take us where we do not think it wise/helpful/appropriate to go?

Joshua and Caleb set us an example (Numbers 14:6-9). As the politicians sometimes say, "They trusted and they verified." They did not suggest that Israel go willy-nilly into this new situation. They scouted it out (14:6). They tested the future. They evaluated what the results would be. And then, only then, they argued that this move would be a good thing (14:7).

Moving into a new day—a new Promised Land—is not easy. God sometimes sends innovators and entrepreneurial spirits and creative sorts to go ahead of us and test the new land. Then the word comes: "Jump in. The water's fine!" Maybe that just might be our baptismal waters.

### What Someone Else Has Said:

In a fictional account of famous Siamese twins (*Chang and Eng*, Dutton), Darin Strauss has one of the brothers write: "In fear, and also to comfort my brother, I began reciting something Father used to say when he was teaching us to fish, 'Mekong Fishermen stay abreast of change.' The adult words comforted

me, even if I barely understood them. 'Rivermen's judgment helps one to make the appropriate decision at the appropriate moment and diminish the influence of fate. Mekong Fishermen stay abreast of change.'

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God, who gives us tomorrow and meets us there, we thank You for the journey to this day and place and look to the times and places where we have not yet been. Give us freedom from our fears and open our ears and eyes to hear and see Your presence in new places. We hear Your invitation to live out Your promises..."

## August 16, 2009

**Text: Numbers 20:1-13**  
**"Moses Disobeys"**

Same hymn. Second stanza...or is it the third or fourth? The Hebrew children come to a bump in the road on their journey to the Promised Land, so they—guess what—complain (Numbers 20:3-5). It is a pattern we have seen before in this unfolding escape from slavery.

Ironically enough, the day before I started working on this lesson, I finished reading *The Girl in the Green Sweater* by Krystyna Chiger. It is account of how Krystyna (then seven years old) and her Jewish family hid in a city sewer system for more than a year, in order to flee certain death at the hands of the Nazi soldiers who commandeered their city.

The first thing these escapees had to do was to find a supply of fresh water. Men in the group discovered a leak in one of the city fountains and they took buckets and collected the water that dripped underground from that leak.

The only access to the water was through a sewer pipe, so the men crawled in that pipe two kilometers to the water and then, because they could not turn around in the pipe, they backed up the two kilometers, all the while carrying a bucket of water in their teeth!

Then, I read this text about the children of Israel carping about the lack of water.

Of course, God provided water. But, in the process, Moses disobeyed God in two ways: (a) he did not follow instructions as to how to get the water (Compare Numbers 20:8 and Numbers 20:11.); (b) he questioned

See "Bible study," page 17

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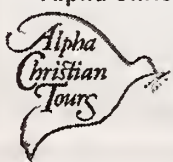
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# August adult Bible study *continued from page 16*

whether God would deliver on God's promise (Numbers 20:10).

Then comes the punch to the stomach: because Moses had not trusted God in this regard, Moses would not enter the Promised Land (Numbers 20:12). To me, that does not seem fair. This is not some casual bystander; this is Moses, set apart for leadership; this is Moses, who more often than not, got it right; this is Moses, the very one God asked to lead the people out of Egypt's slavery. Yet, Moses is held to the same standard as others: failure to trust God means one does not get all the gifts God wants to give.

As a child, how did you feel when you learned that some trusted adult had made a mistake? (I still recall the first time I heard one of my high school teachers curse.)

Yet we are reminded in this story of Moses of the hazard of being a leader. It's the hazard of being human.

A hymn from one of our old Methodist hymnals comes to mind: it closes, "Trust, in God, trust in God, trust in God, and do the right."

## What Someone Else Has Said:

In John Irving's novel *A Widow for a Year*, one character quotes George Eliot: "...What loneliness is more lonely than distrust?"

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of Moses..."

**August 23, 2009**

**Text: Deuteronomy 6:1-9, 20-24**  
**"God Calls for Obedience"**

Deuteronomy 6:20-24 shatters any notion of private religion. When these words were recorded, it was probably several centuries after the Exodus. But note! The writer does not recall that escape from slavery by saying *they* (those people) were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt. The writer said "We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt."

Six hundred years after the Hebrews left Egypt, it is still "we"! God's people live in community, a community that reaches back, reaches around, and reaches ahead. The context in which God gives the command to love (Deuteronomy 6:4) is a command for a community.

One implication of that reality is that if the command is to a community, then we are accountable to one another for how we live out that commandment. Surely, this spirit of accountability shaped early Methodist class meetings and societies. Surely, this spirit of accountability was glue that held together the Holy Club, the Oxford Movement with the Wesleys at Oxford University. Surely, this spirit of accountability

was part of the experience of Jacob Albright who formed the Evangelical Association because of the small group that challenged him to a life of purity. Surely, this spirit of accountability led Philip William Otterbein to draw up a protocol for early United Brethren to meet regularly to tell one another how the spiritual journey was going.

Is it any wonder that today's United Methodism (the merger in 1968 of Wesley's Methodism, Albright's Evangelical Church, and Otterbein's United Brethren) does its best work as a connection?

Is it any wonder that when we are spiritually weak, one thing we most dread is being held accountable for our spiritual shabbiness?

Is it any wonder that we try to privatize religion as no one else's business? Doing so helps us ignore what God has commanded of God's community.

Note the community links in this text: When children asks what is the meaning of what the Lord commanded *you*—6:20 (present time), you shall say "We were Pharaoh's slaves..."—6:21 (past time), and then you shall teach this to your children and your *children's children*—6:2 (future time).

It is a community thing!

## What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Explanatory Notes Upon the Old Testament* (Schmul Publishers), John Wesley writes (commenting on Deuteronomy 6:25), "We shall be owned and pronounced by God to be righteous and holy persons, if we sincerely obey him; otherwise, we shall be declared to be unrighteous and ungodly."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Holy God, You call us to be a holy people so that we might live lives that honor You; You call—nay, You command—that we love one another as we love You; only as by Your grace Your people have been delivered from Egypt's slavery, can we be so sanctified..."

**August 30, 2009**

**Text: Deuteronomy 30:1-10**  
**"God Calls for Decision"**

In Deuteronomy 30:2, God's people are told to obey God. The word translated "obey" is *shâma*. Literally, that word means "to hear intelligently." Surely obedience is more than just giving God "a good listen!"

A clue as to what is meant by "obey" shows up in Deuteronomy 30:6. Obeying God means loving God "with all your heart and with all your soul"—or, as we might say in the twenty-

first century, "with all your mind and will and with all your individuality." It is what John Wesley called "full love of God." Its companion is "full love of neighbor." (That is what John Wesley meant by Christian Perfection.)

The metaphor in Deuteronomy 30:6 ("God will circumcise your heart") is made a bit more clear in the Spanish translation in *Santa Biblia*: "Pondrá la marca del pacto en el corazón"—"(God will) put the mark of the covenant in the heart."

That is what circumcision was to do: remind the Hebrew family (through the males) of the two-way street with God: "You be my people and I shall be Your God." That agreement, that pact, that covenant, with God is a serious matter. Loving God is a matter of life or death (Deuteronomy 30:6).

Note that the biblical view of how we come to love God is not some kind of human activity, no matter how well done. We love God completely because God "circumcises the heart" (30:6). We can love God fully because of something God has done. (Do I hear an echo of the Wesleyan teaching about prevenient grace?)

We can obey God because God first

loves us. ["We love because he first loved us" 1 John 4:19.] That's the covenant God has made with us. As the King James Version records in Deuteronomy 30:15, the options are "life and good" or "death and evil." Why is that such a tough choice to make?

## What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Game Free* (Harper and Row), Thomas Oden has written: "The one concept central to the Judeo-Christian tradition that deepens our perception of intimacy is that of covenant fidelity. Human closeness accordingly may be perceived under the analogy of the divine-human covenant, (that is to say) God's participation in an intimate relation with the people of Israel, and through Israel, with the whole of human history. In Judeo-Christian thought, person-to-person covenant faithfulness is perceived under the illumination of the faithfulness of God toward his covenant people."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of promise and fulfillment, we hear Your call to obey..."

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## Grant Writing Workshop

Dr. Annette Greer is offering a grant writing workshop for lay and clergy members of the NC Conference in August, on three consecutive Mondays.

With extensive experience in writing grants and teaching the course to students pursuing careers in public health at East Carolina University, Greer offers the churches of the NC Conference an opportunity to consider funding for ministries even in an economic downturn.

The dates for the workshop are Aug. 3, Aug. 10 and Aug. 17, from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm. It will be held at Westminster UMC, Kinston. Lunch will be arranged for a reasonable cost.

To register, call the Office of Connectional Ministries, 1-800-849-4433, ext 247, or in the Raleigh area, 919-832-9560, ext 247; or email Linda Harris, leeharris@nccumc.org.

Participants will learn skills for writing and submitting grants, learn how to research and understand the priorities of funders and how to develop strategic planning skills that lead to receiving on-going funding.

Greer is Co-Director of the Office of Interdisciplinary Health Sciences Education, and Clinical Assistant Professor, Department of Public Health, in Greenville. She teaches Counseling and Adult Education at East Carolina University. Her husband is a pastor in the NC Conference.

## Aug. 16 Is Golden Cross Sunday

Ever wondered what it would be like to make a difference in someone's life?

That opportunity will be available to anyone designating an offering to Golden Cross during worship in the local churches on August 16.

Golden Cross is a ministry that reaches out to laity in the North Carolina Conference who are dealing with financial hardships brought on by medical expenses. Golden Cross Sunday on August 16 has been selected as the date to reach out to laity through an offering.

The Golden Cross budget for this year is \$15,000 and \$15,617 has already been spent to assist. Last year the budget was also \$15,000 and \$23,377 was required to meet needs. Almost 10 more families were helped because of the offering support made possible in local churches in the Conference last year.

Local congregations are being asked to take a love offering for Golden Cross on August 16, or another Sunday if it is more convenient. The offering should be designated as Golden Cross. Make a difference in someone's life through this offering to help more laity deal with the stress and hardships of medical expenses they cannot pay. Golden Cross is a Conference Advance Special.

The Rev. Richard C. Vaughan, conference director of Golden Cross, is available to answer questions or to provide additional information (910 754-4840, rvaughan@nccumc.org).

## Mission Team to Jamaica

The Rev. Butch Huffman, NC Conference individual mission volunteer, will lead an NC Conference mission work team to Content Gap, Jamaica, Nov. 3-12 to work on the roof which was blown off during a hurricane in 2007. Orientation for the team will be Sept. 25 (7 p.m.) – Sept. 26 (3 p.m.) at Oak Island UMC. The total cost of the trip is \$1,000/person. Those interested in being on this team or wanting more information should contact Butch Huffman, 919-931-4304 (cell) or butchhuffman@bydasea.net

## Deadlines Set for Youth Programs

By Aug. 31, applications for the following aspects of Pilgrimage must be received by the Office of Youth Ministries. Contact senicholson@nccumc.org:

- ♦ House band members must complete an application (audition also required)
- ♦ Youth groups with an act of worship to offer (send description and adult contact information)
- ♦ Youth seeking to offer a testimony (submit the testimony in writing with the recommendation of a pastor/youth leader)
- ♦ DVDs to be shown must be submitted by Aug. 31.
- ♦ Award of Excellence in Youth Ministry applications are available at [www.nccumc.org/youth](http://www.nccumc.org/youth) or by calling the Office of Youth Ministries

## Workshop on the Holy Sacraments

Dr. Gayle Felton will lead the workshop, "Sacraments, the Means of Grace" at Lake Junaluska July 24-26. This seminar on the United Methodist sacraments - Baptism and Communion - will provide clergy and laity with an exploration of two of the primary Means of Grace and will span theological and practical considerations of the sacraments in the spiritual journey. The seminar concludes with a teaching service of Word and Table. For more information, go to [www.lakejunaluska.com](http://www.lakejunaluska.com) and select Upcoming Events / Sacraments.

## Abrahamic Faiths Unite for Peace at Peace Conference

The Lake Junaluska Peace Conference, Sept. 20-22, will offer a dialogue of better understanding of the faith communities of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Speakers from each faith will describe what their scriptures and practices have to bring to the Table of Peace.

"There is much agreement that we will not have world-wide peace until the major religions understand each other better and develop genuine respect for one other. As we focus this year on the three Abrahamic Faiths, come expecting to be challenged by the presenters. Come with an open mind and an eagerness to enter into creative dialogue with persons of other faiths," Garland Young, chair of the Planning Committee, said. Leadership for the event includes:

- ♦ Archbishop Elias Chacour, Archbishop Metropolitan of the Melkite Diocese of Akka, Haifa, Nazareth, and all of Galilee in Israel, and a strong voice for peace and reconciliation in Palestine and Israel.
- ♦ Rabbi Arthur O. Waskow has been one of the creators and leaders of Jewish renewal and of several important interfaith projects addressing issues of peace, justice, and healing of the Earth.
- ♦ Dr. Sayyid M. Syeed, National Director of Interfaith and Community Alliances for the Islamic Society of North America, has been actively involved in fostering understanding among the world's religions and has participated in interfaith dialogues at different levels.
- ♦ Dr. Lisa Schirch, professor of peace-building at E. Mennonite Univ. in Harrisonburg, VA.

Cost for the conference is \$89 (\$79 before August 1, 2009) and \$65 for students.

Register online at [www.lakejunaluska.com/peace.aspx](http://www.lakejunaluska.com/peace.aspx) or by phone (828) 454-6656.

Lodging reservations can be made at [www.lakejunaluska.com/peace.aspx](http://www.lakejunaluska.com/peace.aspx) or by calling 1-800-222-4930.

Please let the representative know that the reservations are for the Peace Conference.

## Mallet Preaching at Junaluska

In early August, Dr. Reginald Mallet of England will preach at several worship services hosted at Lake Junaluska. Honoring Mallet's 44 years of preaching ministry, some of the celebrations are free and open to all while some have require registration fees.

Mallet has indicated this may be the last year he and his wife will travel from England.

For details, go to [www.lakejunaluska.com](http://www.lakejunaluska.com) and view the Summer Worship Series link.

## conference CALENDAR

### July

- 11 Youth Resolutions Committee, 12:00pm
- 20-25 Annual Conference Session for Youth, Methodist University, Fayetteville
- 22-25 UMW School of Christian Mission, Methodist University, Fayetteville

### August

- 3, 10, 17 Grant Writing Workshops Westminster UMC, Kinston 9:30am-3:30pm
- 16 Golden Cross Sunday

NC Conference events are online at [www.nccumc.org/calendar](http://www.nccumc.org/calendar)

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## around the CONFERENCE



Dr. John Tyson, Brenda Hutchens, Linda Gott, Barbara Carey, Shirley Lynn, Lynn Rouse, and Dave Johnson, who taught the course. (Photo by Linda Johnson)

## Swansboro UMC commissions new Stephen Ministers

Swansboro UMC held a commissioning service May 3rd recognizing the completion of 20 weeks of study by its newest Stephen Ministers: Barbara Carey, Linda Gott, Brenda Hutchens and Shirley Lynn. They join the church's current team of 20 active Stephen Ministers and Leaders. Lynn Rouse, who was trained in the first class the church held in 1998, joined this class for a refresher.

Stephen Ministers serve as an extension of the pastoral staff, sharing the love of Christ with people going through crisis or change in their lives through confidential one to one distinctively Christian caring relationships.

The training includes topics such as listening skills, process oriented goal setting, depression, grief, crisis management, assertiveness, speaking the truth in love and resources available to the caregiver.

Dr. John Tyson, pastor of the congregation explained, "When a church reaches about 80 members, it becomes impossible for a pastor to provide continuing care for all of the congregants who are experiencing difficult times. While the pastors can provide immediate care, Stephen Ministers assist with the sustained care that people require to regain wholeness. The program trains the congregation to serve as the hands of Christ to each other."



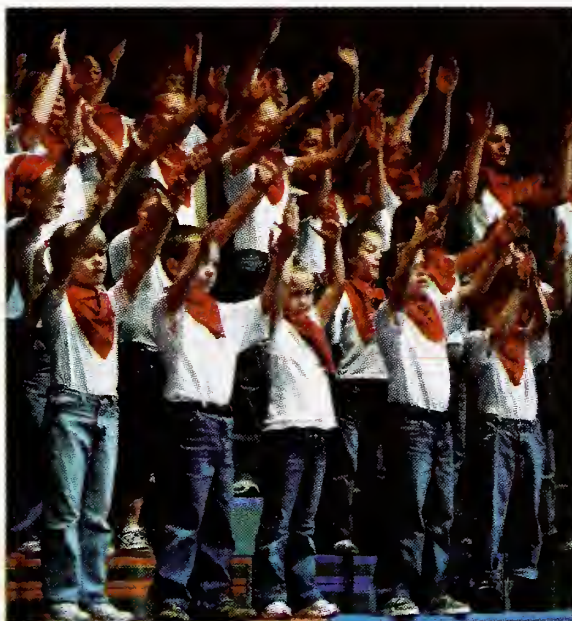
## Sharon UMC members complete Financial Peace University course

Sharon United Methodist Church's pastor Renee Edwards, together with members Teddy and Nancy Driggs, facilitated the Dave Ramsey Finance Peace University course, an outreach program for the community. Through this thirteen-week program, participants paid off debts, cut up credit cards, developed and followed a budget, and saved money even with a difficult economy. They also increased their gifts and tithes by following Ramsey's advice and becoming better managers of their money. Graduates pictured above are (L to R): Bob Gadkowski, Barbara Gadkowski, Jeri Holm, Andy Blankenship, Amy Blankenship, Jackie Southwell, Pastor Renee Edwards, Dan Post, Denise Post, Connie Warren, Paul Warren, Paul Beaumont, Nancy Driggs, Teddy Driggs, John Murphy, and Kim Marphy. Members not present: Paul Southwell, Carl Moore, Jessie Moore.

## Hobgood UMC hosts 90 women for "Frazzled Female Retreat"

On April 26, Hobgood UMC hosted its first Women's Retreat. The theme of this retreat was "The Frazzled Female Retreat." The speaker was Cindi Wood, author, motivational speaker and founder of Frazzled Female Ministries. She is committed to helping women create a deeper relationship with Jesus. The idea for the retreat came after Rhonda Mayer, a member of HUMC, lead a bible study based on the book

*The Frazzled Female*. The women of the church began planning a one day retreat, created flyers, sent out invitations to dozens of churches and began to pray for the women who would attend the retreat. Over 90 women from many different churches and denominations came together at HUMC to learn how to become "victoriously frazzled!" The women attending were served a catered lunch at the newly restored train depot in Hobgood. This was the first major outreach event for the women's group of HUMC a small membership church of 45 average attendance. HUMC sees this retreat as part of their becoming a more risk-taking church in ministry to the community and world.



## Pine Valley Children's Choirs offer spring musical

The Children's Choirs of Pine Valley UMC Wilmington presented their spring musical, *Acorns to Oaks*, on April 25 and 26. Nearly 80 children participated in the Celeste Clydesdale musical based on the parable of the seeds and the sower. Ultimately, the children – and the audience – grasped that the best way to produce the fruit God desires is to plant roots firmly in God's Word. As part of the musical, a "harvest" of hundreds of non-perishable food items were collected from the audience, which went to the church's Food Bank to assist the area's hungry and homeless.

## "Imagine Grace"

By Carole Ellis \*

Historic Grace UMC in downtown Wilmington, began the 21st Century with a vision to expand its campus with a Family Life and Activity Center. This center combines health and wellness and prayer and study retreat options under one roof while offering the congregation the opportunity to reach out to the community with the love and teachings of Jesus Christ.

The cornerstone of this vision was the building for which ground was broken on May 17. This was the culmination of the work of several committees and numerous people in the church. The trailblazers for this project were the long range planning committee under the minister at the time, Bob Bauman. The fundraising committee which coined the name "Imagine Grace" raised \$1 million more in funding than many expected.

When the total cost of the expansion was determined, many wanted to downsize the plan into a smaller and more manageable Welcome Center and Restrooms. The present minister at the time Clyde Denny challenged the congregation to go for the longer term view with the activities center.

Once the building team accepted this challenge, a new plan was developed to get the full expansion at a lower cost. With the completion of this project in late 2010, the vision of the early planners will become a reality through the grace of God and the sacrifices made by the Grace congregation.

\* Carole Ellis is a member of Grace UMC and coordinates the church's Lay Shepherd Ministry.



Several of Grace UMC's children donned hard hats and took their turn shoveling earth.



## Jesus Christ Superstar sequel a collaborative effort in Greenville

A 50-member cast made up of students from East Carolina University, Pitt Community College and members from Jarvis Memorial, St. James, Salem, Covenant, Dover, and Farmville United Methodist Churches all joined forces to perform a sequel to the popular rock opera *Jesus Christ Superstar* in April.

The Saturday evening performance drew 500 and a Sunday matinee had an attendance of 750, both staged in Wright Auditorium on the campus of East Carolina University with a full set and costumes. The event was a fundraiser for the Wesley Foundation of Greenville, and \$6,000 was donated for a kitchen renovation project.

The musical sequel is called *The Third Day* and was written by the Rev. Scott Wilkinson, UM campus minister at ECU, and the Rev. Curtis Campbell, pastor of Kitty Hawk UMC.

*The Third Day* told the Biblical story of the disciples trying to cope with the crucifixion of Jesus and then after the exuberant joy of his resurrection, trying to understand his announcement that he is going to leave them again and go back to the Father.

Musically, *The Third Day* is an opera with all dialogue sung rather than spoken. Its musical styles covered the spectrum from rock to pop to gospel to jazz.

Wilkinson wrote the words and half of the music. Campbell wrote the other half of the score. "Thomas' Song" was written by Michael Commee of Henderson. All three composers have remained close friends since childhood when they attended Westover UMC in Raleigh. They also starred in a production of *Superstar* in 1971 at The Circus Tent Ministry on the Outer Banks.



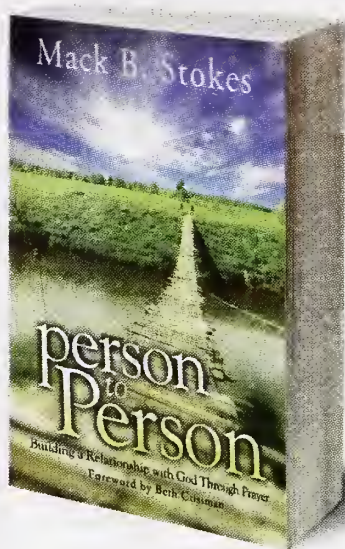
A scene from "The Third Day", an Easter musical performed at Wright Auditorium, April 19 & 20 by students at ECU, Pitt CC and members from 5 UM churches in the Greenville District. From left to right: Sabrina Borum (Salome), Amanda Hunter (Mary Magdalene), Philip Brown (John) and Scott Wilkinson (Simon Peter).

Student Joy Weaver, who is majoring in special education at ECU and member of Trinity UMC, Jacksonville said, "I thought it was awesome! It was nice to see the Bible story portrayed in such a cool way, but there were also all these little metaphors and messages throughout that helped make the Biblical message come alive for today. I texted a bunch of friends Saturday night, and we all went back again Sunday."

The Rev. Paul Dunham, pastor of Farmville UMC, who played one of the disciples in the musical, said, "A bunch from my church went to see the Saturday performance. Sunday morning the whole congregation was talking about it. One woman said, 'I don't know how to put it into words; you just all need to go. Another person said, 'I felt like I was right there in the Upper Room with Jesus.'"

After seeing the Saturday night performance, Greenville District Superintendent, the Rev. Beth Hood said, "I think the reason *The Third Day* had such an affect on me was the witness of all the different groups coming together to proclaim the Good News of Christ: local churches, a campus ministry, community and university personnel. No one group could have pulled this off alone. I'm glad to hear they're planning a repeat performance next year."

Wilkinson says plans are already underway to do *The Third Day* again next year (the weekend after Easter) in Greenville, and he is hoping other churches from around the Conference will consider collaborating to share the music in their communities. Wilkinson says they composers are not charging for the performance rights. Those interested should call him at 252-916-6808.



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Part 2:  
Church-wide Special Sundays  
Pages 7-10

## Healthy Congregations study leads St. Luke UMC, Goldsboro, to live out their mission

By Winkie Lee \*

On a very hot and humid Saturday morning in June, members of St. Luke UMC in Goldsboro worked alongside two young mothers whose dreams of having their own home were coming closer to being a reality.

The temperature was 96 degrees, but the humidity made it feel like 104. T-shirts were covered in perspiration and hands frequently swept

across soaked brows.

No one complained. Instead, they smiled and talked as they painted, cut and nailed vinyl siding to walls, and built cabinets.

Participating in building the Habitat for Humanity houses was the church members' way of living their faith and their mission statement.

Helping people in need – be they from the local community or other states or countries – is not new to St.

Luke and its members, but this push toward mission work in Goldsboro is.

It is a result of the Healthy Congregations study the church conducted last April.

The study showed a number of things, including the fact that members didn't know what their mission statement is, says the Rev. Adam F. Seate, pastor.

See "St. Luke," page 3



Amanda Michelle Chadwick is interning with the Ethnic Young Adult Summer program of the General Board of Church and Society.

## NCC young adult serves as Church & Society intern

Amanda Michelle Chadwick, a member of Benson Memorial UMC in Raleigh, is one of 12 persons, ages 19 to 21, who began work in Washington, D.C. on June 1 in the Ethnic Young Adult (EYA) Summer Internship program of the United Methodist General Board of Church & Society (GBCS).

They will work in nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations in the nation's capital for two months.

Young adults are selected annually from the five ethnic caucuses of The United Methodist Church (UMC) to participate in the internships. To qualify, applicants must be passionate about social justice and active in the denomination, according to the Rev. Neal Christie, GBCS assistant general secretary for Education and Leadership Development who directs the program.

This year's placement sites include the National Assn. for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the National Coalition to Abolish

See "Summer Internship," page 3



(L-R) Jamila Hatley, new homeowner, talks with Connie Atkinson, extreme right; and Dale White about the siding for the house. Cathy White, center, looks over the completed siding work.

## ZOE Ministry receives two grants from UMCOR, feeds students and teachers

Recently, in response to the ongoing food shortages and economic crisis in Zimbabwe, UMCOR provided two grants to ZOE Ministry, an Advance Special based in the North Carolina Conference.

The grants fund one meal a day for three months to 10,000 students and teachers in Zimbabwe.

ZOE Ministry has used the grants to procure 48 metric tons of grain and 16.5 tons of mahewu (maize) from local sources for students.

Distributing food throughout the school year encourages students to

stay in school and provides hunger relief until harvest season. The schools will send food home with children during its season breaks so there will be no gap in the assistance they receive.

UMCOR also supports three hospitals in Zimbabwe which remain open while other hospitals in the country are closed.

For more information about UMCOR's work, visit <http://new.gb-gm-umc.org/umcor>. More information on ZOE Ministry is available at [www.zoeministry.org](http://www.zoeministry.org).



## Swansboro youth serve on ASP mission team to Tennessee

*"The problems of the poor continue, so our work continues... everyone can do something beautiful for God by reaching out to poor people in their own countries. This is the future—this is God's wish for us—to serve through love in action..." Mother Teresa*

By Dave Johnson \*

For the seventh year, the youth of Swansboro UMC (SUMC) took these words to heart as they served the needy of the Appalachia region by doing home repairs.

Seventeen youth and 11 adults, including three from Tabernacle/Belgrade UMCs, worked to make homes safer, warmer and drier through the Appalachia Service Project (ASP). It was a long trip to Campbell County, TN (north of Knoxville on the Kentucky border) where the poverty rate is 23.9%, but the team felt the experience proved rewarding.

On returning, Hannah Simpson, a rising high school junior reported her experiences to the church congregation. Speaking of homeowner Kathy and her wheelchair-bound grandson Wesley, "It's amazing how happy people can be with next to nothing. They can have a rotting foundation, the roof can be collapsing in on them and they can still be the happiest people you've ever met."

Church groups from Michigan, Florida and Georgia joined the Swansboro team living at the local elementary school for the week. All the groups and the local families joined for a picnic on Thursday evening. Corey Crawford, a rising high school senior, told SUMC how one family was told they would be getting running water for the first time later this summer.

A young girl in the family was heard to say "Does this mean that I can be clean when I go to school next year?" Corey reported, "That got me thinking about everything we take for granted, such as: having a sink, being able to brush your teeth, not only taking a warm shower, but taking any shower at all. When we heard that we were able to do this for this family, everyone was overcome with joy. This taught me to be grateful for everything I have."

Tina, a divorced mother of two boys ages 6 and 11, had been hit by lightning when she was 10 and is now experiencing gradually debilitating nerve damage.

The ASP staff stopped to offer help when they saw her with her walker on a collapsing porch. Thanks to the hard work and generosity of our area churches, Tina now has a deck and ramp structure that will give her mobility. She held back tears watching her two sons make new friends, learn new skills and gain a sense of accomplishment while working with the youth.

Another Swansboro crew replaced underpinnings and built a new roof structure for homeowner Linda and the fourth crew repaired floors, walls and sealed the roof for Rosa and her extended family.

"The theme for ASP this year is 'Putting Faith Forward' and our team did just that," said Dave Johnson who organized the trip.



It's all smiles as one of the Swansboro teams gather with Kathy and Wesley on their new deck and stairs.

"I was really impressed with the eagerness of our youth to not only work really hard, but also to show love and concern for the families we served and the groups we lived with all week."

"It was wonderful to see the generations of the church work and laugh together. Six of our eleven adults are over sixty and our youth are as young as fourteen, but it felt like one happy family," Johnson said.

In her concluding remarks to the church, Hannah summed it up pretty well, "ASP, last year and this year are the best thing I've done with my life."

She encouraged the congregation to "jump at the opportunity to go on a mission trip and experience the joy of serving others."

\* Dave Johnson is ASP coordinator and leader at Swansboro UMC.



RIGHT: Tom Scholl instructs Desiree McCabe on using a circular saw while Jake Norris and Max Harlacher assist.

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# St. Luke congregation inspired to take action on mission statement through Healthy Congregations study *from page 1*

That mission statement is simple – and wide reaching. It reads: “To be a warm church with open hearts sharing the peace, joy and love of God with the least, the last and lost.”

A conclusion reached during St. Luke’s Healthy Congregations meeting was that church members need to know the statement by heart and by action.

Groups and members within the church had long been active in helping others, often traveling to other states and countries to do so. But there was a desire to do more in the



Dale White prepares to cut siding.

local community.

And the Habitat project was just the beginning. Three days later, St. Luke held its first Job Seekers support group meeting, providing unemployed people with the first in a number of weekly sessions focusing on topics that will help them in their search for work. Participants were treated to information, coffee and encouragement, all gladly provided by the church.

In the fall, St. Luke will offer Celebrate Recovery, a weekly 12-step recovery program for those in need of breaking a harmful addiction, be it alcoholism, drug abuse, overeating or gambling. It doesn’t matter what the problem is: If people want help, they are welcome to participate.

With renewed purpose, church members worked alongside the two young women who watched their homes take shape and their lives change on that recent hot June morning.

“It’s wonderful for people to build you a house,” said Jamila Hailey, 22.

Having the home will give her daughters, Enilah, 4, and Jakayla, 1, a safer place to live than if they had to grow up in the projects, she says. There will be no fear of someone kicking them out, she continues: “This is

our home.”

Jacqueline Rouse, 34, spoke of what the home she receives will mean to her daughter, Danielle, 11. There will be a backyard “for my daughter to play in,” she says. “It will be good for her. She loves to play outside.” Danielle will also have her own room.

And Rouse and Hailey got to see what St. Luke members want the church to show: “open hearts sharing the peace, joy and love of God...”

\* Winkie Lee is a freelance writer.



ABOVE: The Rev. Adam Seate

LEFT: (L-R) Jackie Rouse, right, homeowner, talks with Connie Atkinson, with paint roller, about paint in the house.



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## Summer internship at GBCS

*continued from page 1*

the Death Penalty (NCADP), Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC), National Council of Churches of Christ-USA (NCCC) and Justice for Our Neighbors (JFON).

Chadwick, a business administration major, is working at the Children’s Defense Fund, which champions policies to lift children out of poverty; protect them from abuse and neglect; and ensure their access to health care and quality education.

### 11 conferences, every jurisdiction

The 12 interns are drawn from 11 UMC annual (regional) conferences. Each of the denomination’s five U.S. jurisdictions is represented.

The 2009 interns include four African Americans, three Hispanic/Latinos, and five Asian American/Pacific Islanders.

“For the first time, five of our 12 interns will receive significant college credit for their eight-week internship,” Christie emphasized.

“This puts the EYA internship in another league when their universities trust our faith-based approach to leadership development, and our commitment to excellence in terms of intern placements, mentoring, community building, advocacy and organizing skills and evaluation,” said Christie.

### American University

EYA summer interns are housed at United Methodist-related American University.

They attend church together each Sunday, and meet for weekly evening devotions and Bible studies.

The interns also travel to New York City to visit GBCS’s office across the street from the United Nations. That office houses the agency’s United Nations and International Affairs work area.

In addition to their work placements, interns also participate in weekly seminars exploring issues that affect different racial/ethnic communities.

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## Opening for conference director of New Faith Communities

The NC Annual Conference is seeking a director of New Faith Communities.

This role, formerly called director of Congregational Development, will focus primarily on the development of new worshipping communities. A key focus of the director will be to create a culture across the Annual Conference for planting and launching new faith communities.

In addition, the director will identify, equip, and support new faith community launchers (both clergy and lay) and coaches who will support launchers. The director will work with existing communities to develop multi-campus sites and help establish partnerships between strong existing congregations and new launches.

The successful candidate will be a life-long learner with strong interpersonal skills, a passion for the unchurched, a desire to work in community with others, and the ability to cast vision. The person selected will be an individual with a proven ability to equip, empower, and encourage others; to move vision to reality and provide effective leadership in financial campaigns.

In addition, the director will demonstrate a willingness to become a student of North Carolina culture. Experience in launching a new faith community is desired, but not required. The director of New Faith Communities will report directly to the Bishop.

More information is provided at <http://nccumc.org/employment/director-of-new-faith-communities/>. Applications will be accepted through the month of August.

## DOT steps up enforcement of church vehicle regulations

The U.S. Department of Transportation has begun enforcing regulations regarding vehicles of "Non-business PMCPs" which include churches, private schools, scout groups, and other organizations that may purchase or lease buses for the private transportation of their respective groups.

If the vehicle meets one of four criteria and crosses state lines, it must comply with regulations or face fines of up to \$11,000 per day: a) has a combination vehicle weight of more than 10,001 lbs.; b) transports between 9 and 15 passengers (including the driver) for compensation; c) designed to transport 16 or more passengers; d) transports hazardous waste materials.

Churches are strongly urged to review the descriptions and policies posted on the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration website at <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/safety-security/eta/motcarrofpassengers.htm> to make sure church and daycare vehicles comply.

## Corrections from July Advocate

In the caption with the First Time Local Pastors, the name of Emily Hudson Davis should have been listed instead of Christi Desha Dye. There was also a misspelling in the name Hervey Galloway III.

The photographer of the Retired Pastors photograph should have been Derek Leek.

## Two Conference Special Sundays coming in August

### Golden Cross Sunday

Ever wondered what it would be like to make a difference in someone's life? That opportunity will be available to anyone designating an offering to Golden Cross during worship in the local churches on August 16.

Golden Cross is a ministry that reaches out to laity in the North Carolina Conference who are dealing with financial hardships brought on by medical expenses. Golden Cross Sunday on August 16 has been selected as the date to reach out to laity through an offering.

The Golden Cross budget for this year is \$15,000 and \$15,617 has already been spent to assist. Last year the budget was also \$15,000 and \$23,377 was required to meet needs. Almost 10 more families were helped because of the offering support made possible in local churches in the Conference last year.

Local congregations are being asked to take a love offering for Golden Cross on August 16, or another Sunday if it is more convenient. The offering should be designated as Golden Cross. Make a difference in someone's life through this offering to help more laity deal with the stress and hardships of medical expenses they cannot pay. Golden Cross is a Conference Advance Special.

The Rev. Richard C. Vaughan, conference director of Golden Cross, is available to answer questions or to provide additional information (910 754-4840, [rvaughan@nccumc.org](mailto:rvaughan@nccumc.org)).

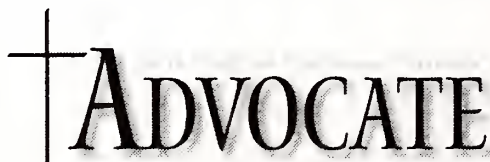
### DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Sunday

This summer Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries (DBOM) is celebrating 10 years of ministry. Created in 1999 in partnership with the Western North Carolina Conference, DBOM has helped answer God's call to visit those in prison.

DBOM establishes and manages DISCIPLE Bible Study ministries in adult prisons and RINGS OF FELLOWSHIP Bible study ministries in the Juvenile facilities. Thousands of prison inmates and hundreds of local church volunteers have now participated in DBOM's ministry. In addition, DBOM has provided free DISCIPLE Bible Study training in local districts. By the end of 2010, DBOM will have offered free training in every district in the NCC, making the DISCIPLE Bible Study ministry accessible to individuals in the 56 counties in the Conference.

On Aug. 23, the churches of the Conference are invited to highlight DBOM's ministries and support its ongoing witness through the DBOM Sunday Offering. Churches have been provided offering envelopes through the district offices. Almost half of DBOM's annual needs are met through this offering. If Aug. 23 is not convenient for a local church, another date can be selected. Questions can be directed to the Rev. Mark Hicks, director of DBOM at [mhicks@nccumc.org](mailto:mhicks@nccumc.org) or (336) 454-5348.

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### Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org).

Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

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**Contact:** [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org) or (919) 832-9560 with any questions.



# Cradle of southern Methodism is location for history celebration

By John K. Bergland & Laura Bailey \*

The NCC Historical Society and the NCC Commission on Archives and History joined with host churches, Jerusalem and Warren Plains United Methodist Churches at a gathering at the Roanoke River, (now Lake Gaston) on Saturday, May 23.

Bobby and Janie Coley hosted the pig picking, storytelling, and hymn singing celebration at their restored 1800's farm house on their property.

Stories about the history of the area and the establishment of Methodist societies were shared by Dr. Bill Simpson, Dr. John Bergland and Harvey Powers.

For special music, Sarah Bergland sang a few songs including "His Eye Is on the Sparrow" and group hymn singing was led by John Bergland,

her grandfather. Brody Tubaugh, Duke intern, blessed the meal.

The Rev. Mack McMillan arrived on horseback to preach in the farm yard to a crowd of over 140 people. He challenged the group by pointing out that the same pioneer spirit and steadfast faith that was required to establish the Methodist Church in the past is needed today. And maybe, more so, he suggested, as church people step out into communities where the story of Christianity is not new and is, in some cases, not appreciated.

He told the group that the Bible warns that followers need to be "as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves." McMillan, district superintendent in Rocky Mount, used Chapter 10 of Matthew as the text for the message that honored the past and embraced the future of people called "Methodist" in eastern North Carolina.

## Southern Methodism begins

In the fall of 1766, Barbara Heck, shaped by the teachings of John Wesley, gathered a group of Methodists in her home in New York City. She persuaded Philip Embury to preach to these "Methodists" who were about to make a "shipwreck of their faith." Embury preached his first sermon (1767) in a rigging loft. This was the beginning of John Street Church, the cradle of Methodism in



The Rev. Mack McMillan, Rocky Mount district superintendent, arrived on horseback to preach in the farm yard to a crowd of over 140 people. He challenged the group by pointing out that the same pioneer spirit and steadfast faith that was required to establish the Methodist Church in the past is needed today. (Photos by the Rev. Jack Benfield)



the north.

By April 1768, the New York Methodists were so confident about their future that they wrote to John Wesley asking that he send them a preacher, "a man of wisdom, of sound faith, and a disciplinarian." Wesley appointed Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmore. They reached America in 1769.

Before they sailed, Robert Williams, an Irish street preacher came on his own. Wesley wouldn't license him to preach, but allowed that he could preach under the authority of another licensed preacher. The Irishman sold his horse and sailed for the American Colonies.

He joined forces with a Maryland

farmer/lay preacher, Robert Strawbridge. Following the providence of God he preached his first sermon (1772) on the court house steps in Norfolk.

Then, as a circuit rider associated with the Petersburg Society, he formed Brunswick circuit (26 preaching places) along the Roanoke River. Yeargain's Chapel, now beneath the waters of Lake Gaston in the state's old Bute County, was the cradle of Methodism in the south.

\* Dr. John K. Bergland is chair of the NCC Commission on Archives & History and Laura Bailey is conference Media Center director and staff representative for Archives & History..



Sarah Bergland sang a few songs including "His Eye Is on the Sparrow" and group hymn singing was led by John Bergland, her grandfather. (Photo by Laura Bailey)

## Junaluska's new walking trail guide features historical detail

Starting this month, visitors to Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center will learn little known facts about Lake Junaluska when they receive free copies of the Lake Junaluska Walking Trail Guide. The guide includes historical information about Lake Junaluska, sites seen while walking the trail around the Lake, as well as information about additional facilities on Lake Junaluska's campus.

A 2.6-mile walking trail circles Lake Junaluska's campus. Many members of the local community and visitors enjoy daily walks around the Lake. The SEJ Heritage Center, Art Swarthout, and Bill Lowry gathered the Lake's history for the guide. Until recently, Lake Junaluska's history sat uncatalogued in the SEJ Heritage Center archives. Over the past few years, Bill Lowry and Art Swarthout catalogued and organized the entire history of Lake Junaluska.

For more information about the Lake Junaluska Walking Trail or to download a guide, visit [www.lakejunaluska.com/laketrail.aspx](http://www.lakejunaluska.com/laketrail.aspx).

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## Christian Life Council: A family built on faith

### A Commentary from a Louisburg College student

By Brittany Hunt \*

*"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up...Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." Ecclesiastes. 4:9-12 NIV*

Intrinsic unity and amorphous uncertainty...two components that, like blood and water, are separate in nature and seemingly incongruent, yet, together, are able to exist in harmony.

As a team leader of the Christian Life Council (CLC) and a rising sophomore at Louisburg College (LC), I have been amazed at the fluid passion of every individual in my LC family. The Council is a Christian organization that is open to share God's love on campus and in the community.

We provide opportunities for the students, staff, and faculty to strengthen their relationship with God and to relate to each other in love and acceptance through focus on worship, prayer, service, and community outreach.

As such, the CLC is more than a council, a community, or even a group. It's more like a family. We are tied together by bonds of pure love and tolerance. One of our brothers knew the Lord when he passed the chapel's threshold. Another looked up at the stained glass window with the holy sign smiling down at him in rays of red, green, and blue and

began to trust the Lord with his sorrows and woes. Two of our sisters have not been baptized. More than one member of our Council is homosexual. Some have been abused.

But these bonds of fragility give way to a sweltering, all-consuming love within the twilight of tragedy. Death is not unknown. Discrimination is not dead. Depression is a cancer.

Despite all of this turmoil, we are a family. We are the heroes, the rebels, the victims, the mothers, the children, the saints, and the sinners -- yet we are all one in the eyes of God. And within the eyes of God is where we each find our niche, our meaning, and, ultimately, our family. We are family...not in the sense that we are

similar, but that we support and love each other when we are different.

We held a variety of activities throughout the academic year which benefited both the cause of the Lord and each of our personal spiritual journeys. These self-motivated tasks tied closely into spreading love throughout all of the LC family.

During the 2008 Christmas season, the CLC participated in the Angel Tree Project of the Prison Fellowship Ministry which provided twenty-eight Christmas gifts to children of parents who were incarcerated. CLC students returned to campus to collect donations and wrap Christmas gifts purchased on behalf of those parents to show God's love and to remind the children that their parents were

there and they loved them. This mission was extremely critical in reaching out to the local youth, who are the most susceptible to suffer from feelings of neglect. When we pulled together as a family, we let these children grow and feel comforted by simply being remembered, regardless of their circumstances, cultural background, or class.

The Week of Love, which was held in honor of Valentine's Day, focused on our love for the community, the environment, and the Lord. These activities began with a community service project involving CLC members picking up trash behind the dormitories and educating the entire

See "Commentary," page 14

## Christ UMC celebrates Methodist Home for Children Night with stories from orphanage alumni

It was a night of fun and good food. The congregation of Christ UMC in the Fayetteville District met to celebrate its ministry to the Methodist Home for Children in the church fellowship hall.

Five men who grew up at the Methodist Orphanage during the 30s, 40s, and 50s were present: Al Bradford, former Mayor of Hope Mills, Dr. Fred Hasty, Dr. Robert Taylor, Paul Smith, and Frank Daniels, pastor of Christ UMC.

The orphanage alumni shared their stories about the simple meal of peanut butter, molasses, bread, and milk that was served every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday night in the central dining hall.

Daniels demonstrated how the children went about preparing the peanut butter and molasses to experience the best taste:

Step 1: The peanut butter was placed in a plate

Step 2: Molasses was poured over the peanut butter

Step 3: The molasses and peanut butter were stirred vigorously

Step 4: A knife was used to spread the mix on a piece of white loaf bread

Step 5: Bites were chased down gulps of fresh milk.

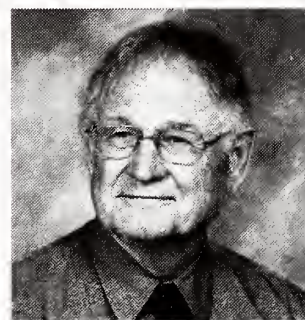
After the demonstra-

tion, those gathered were invited to partake of a meal that nourished hundreds of children of years gone by.

Although the orphanage is no longer in place, the Methodist Home for Children is still doing much-needed work serving children in eastern NC in the name of Christ.

MHC's philosophy shifted to community-based programs with a special emphasis on prevention and early intervention services.

The congregation raised over \$700 for the ministry of MHC.



Rev. Frank Daniels

## Quilt presented to Rev. and Mrs. Cummings honoring their service

Sunday, June 21 was the culmination of 30 years as a pastor for the Rev. Dufrene Cummings.

At the service honoring Cummings, he took the opportunity to share his

story as an unsaved young man, his confession and baptism, and his awe when called to preach the Word of God. "I was used to plowing in the fields with a mule and the thought of going

to Duke University was totally out of my realm of possibilities," he said.

Reverend Cummings also spoke of his many trips while studying for the pastorate and how blessed he had been to have found a Christian woman in his wife, Peggy.

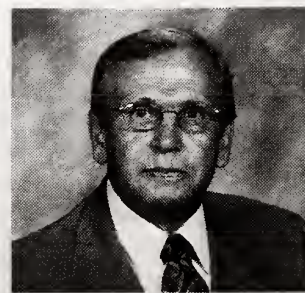
Dr. Ruth Dial Woods, chair of the Pastor Parish Relations Committee, made the presentation of a handmade queen-sized quilt on behalf of the congregation. The quilt pattern was entitled "Around the World" and an embroidered message reads:

*"With recognition and deep appreciation to Reverend and Mrs. Dufrene Cummings*

*for sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ Our Lord."*

Dr. Woods utilized scripture from Jeremiah 1:5 related to sanctification and ordination of a prophet and Jeremiah 3:15 when God spoke of providing pastors with knowledge and understanding in showing appreciation to Rev. Cummings.

Also at the presentation were their two daughters, Dufrena who is preparing to become a teacher and Zena, a registered nurse, and three granddaughters. Rev. Cummings is the son of the Rev. Simeon Cummings who also retired from the NC Conference.



Rev. Dufrene Cummings

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# Church-wide Special Sundays

**WHEN WE GIVE FROM THE HEART**, we receive unexpected blessings—especially the joy of making a difference in someone's life. In The United Methodist Church, we have six annual opportunities to share beyond our regular gifts through churchwide Special Sundays with offerings.

† **WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY** (first Sunday of October) provides scholarships for U.S. (racial- and ethnic-minority) students and international students, on both undergraduate and graduate levels. World Communion Sunday: October 4, 2009

† **UNITED METHODIST STUDENT DAY** (last Sunday of November) furnishes scholarships and loans for students attending United Methodist-related and other accredited colleges and universities. United Methodist Student Day: November 29, 2009

† **HUMAN RELATIONS DAY** (Sunday before the national observance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday) strengthens United Methodist outreach to communities in the United States and Puerto Rico, encouraging social justice and work with at-risk youth. Human Relations Day: January 17, 2010

† **ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING** (fourth Sunday in Lent) enables the United Methodist Committee on Relief to reach out through worldwide ministries of food, shelter, health and peace. One Great Hour of Sharing: March 14, 2010

† **NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES SUNDAY** (third Sunday of Easter) nurtures mission with Native Americans and provides scholarships for UM Native American seminarians. Native American Ministries Sunday: April 18, 2010

† **PEACE WITH JUSTICE SUNDAY** (first Sunday after Pentecost) enables The United Methodist Church to have a voice in advocating for peace and justice through a broad spectrum of global programs. Peace with Justice Sunday: May 30, 2010



OPENING  
DOORS.  
CHANGING  
THE  
WORLD.

UNITED METHODIST SPECIAL SUNDAYS

## In This Issue:

Resources for World Communion Sunday, United Methodist Student Day and Human Relations Day. Resources for the other three Special Sundays were included in the March 2009 edition of the *Advocate*.

### ORDER FREE RESOURCES

ONLINE at [http://secure.](http://secure.umcom.org/store/catalog/Special-Sundays,28.aspx)

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[Special-Sundays,28.aspx](http://secure.umcom.org/store/catalog/Special-Sundays,28.aspx)

## Generosity brings Hope

Reflecting on the economy, maybe another yardstick needs to be used for wealth rather than just the number of dollars in one's pocket, purser, or bank account. Do you still have a home? Do you have transportation? Did you get enough to eat yesterday? Did you have clean water to drink?

In a web posting at [www.85broads.com](http://www.85broads.com), Kathy LeMay writes:

*We cannot create the possible until we practice what feels impossible. In 2009 I urge you to take a leap like you've never taken before. What do you have to lose? Be as generous as you can in anyway that you can in every moment that presents itself. By doing so, you will develop a habit of giving that will transform the world. It will also transform you.*

*Being generous does not mean making a charitable gift that you cannot afford. However, being generous does mean writing any size check, even if you're worried about money.*

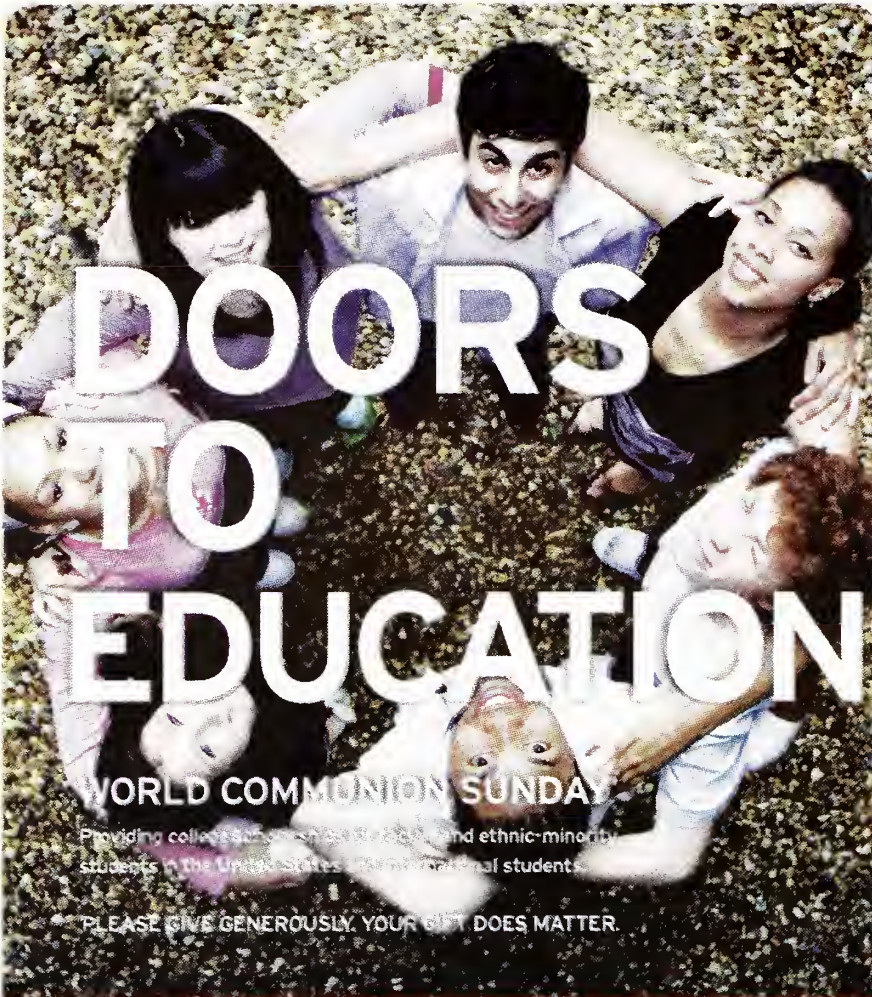
*Being generous does not mean overextending to fatigue and burnout. However, being generous does mean revisiting priorities and ensuring that the material does not supersede the spiritual.*

Think of Jesus on that hillside along the Sea of Galilee. The crowd has pressed in on him, and the disciples want Jesus to send the crowd away because they don't have any food to share. Scarcity mentality has set in big time. One boy has offered up what he has: some loaves and a few fish. In Jesus' hands, it is an abundance.

The United Methodist Church can accomplish mighty tasks, deriving strength from congregations worldwide working together toward a common goal – making disciples for Christ. To fund mission work around the globe, resources are pooled together. One church cannot save the world, but thousands of churches working together can.

The Church seeks to use resources wisely, but this is also a time to see clearly the abundance and boldly share it. The Church is not running on empty, not in regard to compassion, or hunger for justice, or enthusiasm for evangelism, or concern for the poor. Let generosity – extravagant generosity – still be the rule. Put the offering into Jesus hands and let Jesus show all the abundance.





## World Communion Sunday

**October 4, 2009**

*"Give instruction to the wise, and they will become wiser still; teach the righteous and they will gain in learning."*

*Proverbs 9:9, NRSV*

World Communion Sunday is one of the six churchwide Special Sundays of The United Methodist Church. The World Communion Sunday offering provides scholarships for U.S. (racial- and ethnic-minority) and international students.

Students who receive scholarships study in a wide variety of fields: family pastoral care, Christian-Muslim relations, clinical psychology, peace and governance, crop production, law, health, rural development and more. Currently, students receiving the scholarships represent more than 25 countries.

World Communion Sunday is a time to be in communion with Christians all over the world and to enable us to "press on toward the goal" of serving God in life-changing ministries.

Offering proceeds provide scholarships for international and United States (racial- and ethnic-minority) graduate students and scholarships for racial and ethnic minority persons seeking second careers in church-related vocations.

- + 50% of the offering provides Crusade Scholarships for international and U.S. racial- and ethnic-minority graduate students through the World Communion Scholarship Program. Crusade Scholars represent more than 25 countries.
- + 35% supports Ethnic Scholarships for undergraduate students.
- + 15% funds Ethnic In-Service Training Program scholarships for racial- and ethnic-minority persons seeking second careers in church-related vocations.

World Communion Sunday is celebrated with an offering the first Sunday of October. Donations can be made online year-round.

**For more information visit [www.umcsgiving.org/wcs](http://www.umcsgiving.org/wcs)**

## World Communion Sunday

### Hispanic/Latino Leadership and Spiritual Formation Academy

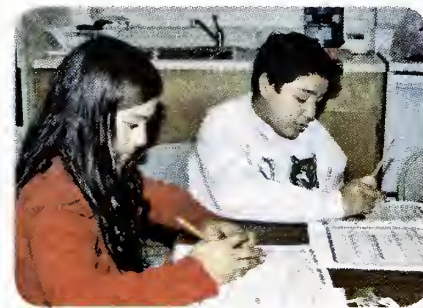
**Joint program of NC and Western NC Conferences received grant**

When you hear the words "World Communion Sunday," what comes to mind? Sharing the sacrament with your family in faith around the world? Assisting students through Crusade Scholarships and Ethnic Scholarships?

All of those images are correct, but the Special Sunday offering also funds Ethnic In-Service Training, a program of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

One \$10,000-grant recipient in recent years was the North Carolina Academy of Leadership and Spiritual Formation for Hispanic Ministry that provided academic and spiritual training for Hispanic leadership in the Western North Carolina and the North Carolina annual conferences. According to the grant application, while about half a million Hispanics live in North Carolina, at the time the grant application was written, there was just one Hispanic elder among 30 appointments to Hispanic churches in both conferences. Remaining congregations were led by local pastors and lay missionaries.

The academy was a cooperative venture of the two conferences, United Methodist-related Pfeiffer University and Albemarle District Hispanic Ministries. Participants gathered quarterly for two-day sessions with United Methodist professors in each of four areas: Bible, theology, Methodism and pastoral care.



Celebrated the first Sunday in October, World Communion Sunday nurtures students to lead, today and in the future. Along with Ethnic In-Service Training, your offering provides scholarships for U.S. (racial- and ethnic-minority) and international students.

**"Be generous," Ecclesiastes 11:1-2 (The Message) advises. "Invest in acts of charity. Charity yields high returns. . . . Be a blessing to others."**

### Angolan scholar attends Bennett College

Several years ago, *Interpreter* magazine ran a feature about two United Methodist Ethnic Scholars. One was Marta da Silva of Luanda, Angola. At the time Marta, the fourth of eight children, was the first family member to attend college and the first Angolan student at church-related Bennett College for Women in Greensboro. A chemistry major, Marta dreamed of becoming a teacher and using her education to help her family. In 2001, she graduated from college.

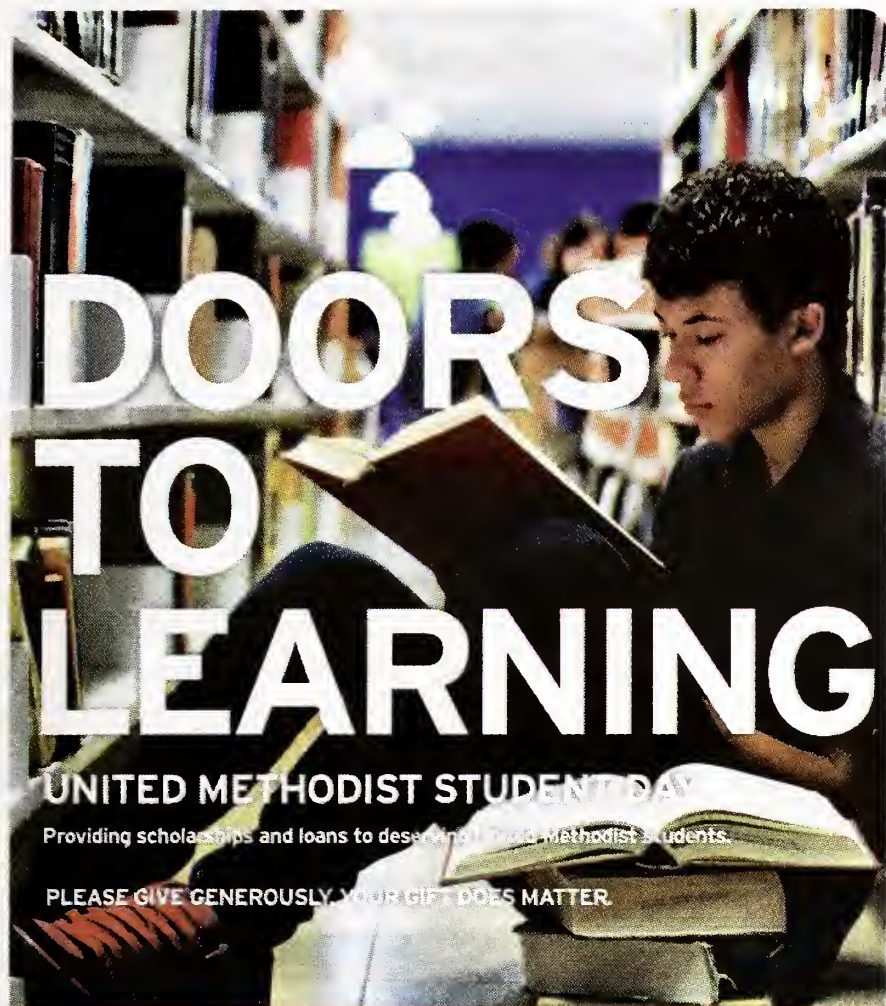
God and faith remain important to Marta, who struggled with English when she started college and became proficient enough to tutor other students. Today this member of the United Methodist Church in Luanda loves "to work as a children's Sunday school teacher and youth counselor.

"I thank God for all the blessings," she wrote in a letter. "I thank the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and The United Methodist Church in Angola for their scholarships, Bishop Emilio de Carvalho and his wife for the opportunity to obtain higher education, and for all support I received during my studies. Thanks for this opportunity and for believing in me," she concluded. "With God's grace, everything is possible."



*"God loves it when the giver delights in the giving. God can pour on the blessings in astonishing ways so that you're ready*





## United Methodist Student Day

**November 29, 2009**

*"Get wisdom — it's worth more than money;  
choose insight over income every time."  
Proverbs 16:16, The Message*

The United Methodist Student Day offering awards loans and scholarships to students who attend United Methodist and other accredited colleges and universities.

In addition, each annual conference gets 10 percent of its Student Day receipts to award to merit scholars.

Like many things, college costs continue to rise. Thanks to United Methodist Student Day, people in the NC Conference — perhaps even members of your family—have a chance to attain higher education. Students attending United Methodist and other accredited colleges and universities receive scholarships and loans.

Of the 122 educational institutions related to The United Methodist Church, 13 are United Methodist seminaries.

Ninety percent of the United Methodist Student Day offering helps support the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry scholarship programs, while 10 percent is for student loans.

Each United Methodist-related college receives money from the offering for scholarships.

Grateful for generous gifts to the United Methodist Student Day offering, a Gift of Hope scholar thinks frequently about the importance of faith in his life. "When I left for school, thinking about my church family and the scholarship I received, I felt fully embraced and supported by The United Methodist Church. As a result, I am motivated to achieve my personal best."

United Methodist Student Day is celebrated with an offering the last Sunday of November.

**For more information visit [www.umcgiving.org/umsd](http://www.umcgiving.org/umsd)**

## United Methodist Student Day

### South Carolina student offers music for the spirit

Melissa Crawford has always wanted to work at something she loved. When she was in the eighth grade, she discovered what that was: playing the organ. Now the 19-year-old is an organ performance major at Furman University, Greenville, S.C. When she graduates, she will find herself where she feels called to be—in the local church.

"I think it's really great to provide music for church services," she said. "It's a wonderful experience, and in some cases, I would even say it is a spiritual experience. When you connect the words of hymns with the melody, the melody puts a lot of emotion and feeling behind the words," the young organist said. "It sets the mood for the congregation and, quite often, it brings people closer to God."

Her most requested hymn? "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence." Her personal picks? "The Church's One Foundation" and "My Hope is Built."

"Music is such a joyous thing. It helps so many people connect emotionally with the spiritual message," Melissa said. "I just don't think it feels like church without music."

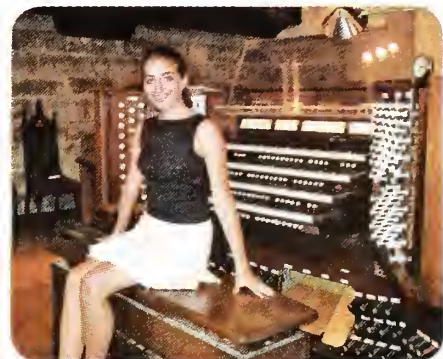
At Furman, Melissa is busy with classes in musical analysis and aural skills, but it is the organ lessons she looks forward to the most.

"I feel drawn to music in every way," she said. "Since it comes so easy to me, I think it's what God wants me to do."

Melissa says her Gift of Hope scholarship is one big reason she can offer others the gift of music. Donations by churchgoers on United Methodist Student Day make possible scholarships and loans to Melissa and other deserving students.

"I definitely needed the scholarship because money was very tight," Melissa explained. "I was so thrilled when I received it because it meant I could stop worrying about finances and concentrate on my music and my studies."

"I'm honored to receive it, and I'm honored to share my talents with the church."



### Funds urgently needed to support students seeking education

United Methodist scholarship and loan applicants are being turned away because of limited education funds. There is an urgent need for donations to United Methodist Student Day. Students from the NC Conference and worldwide will be grateful for the support.

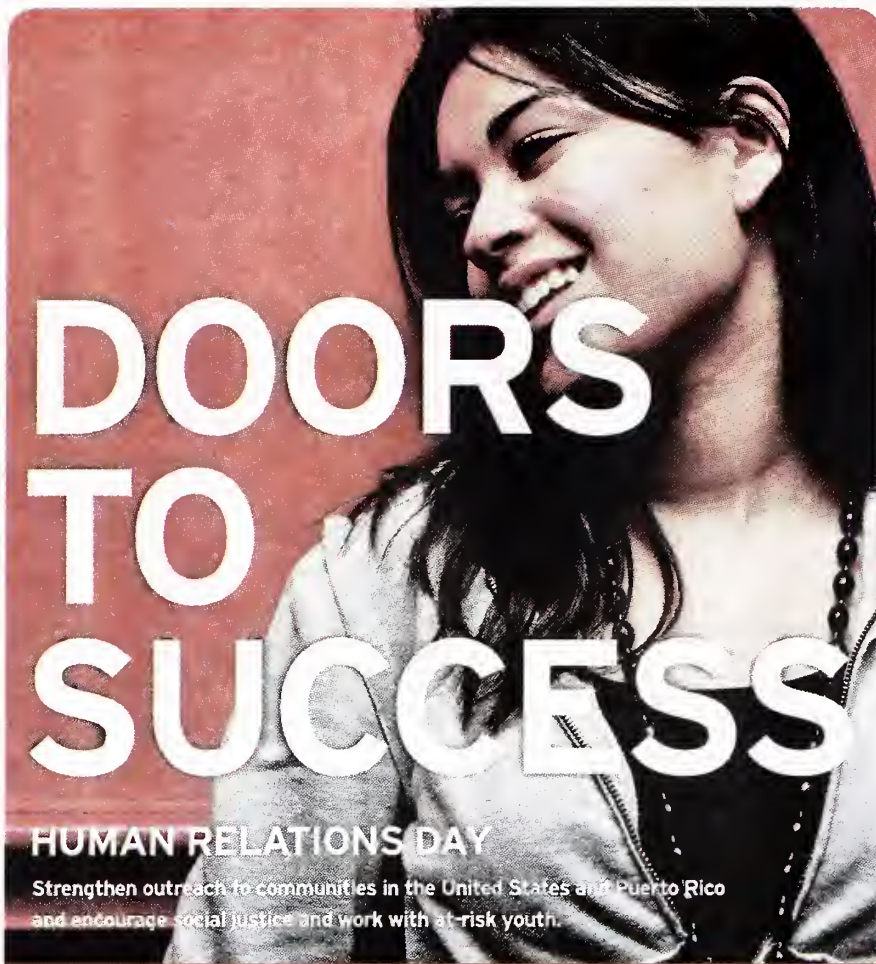
Limited education funds are another sign of the hard times many inside and outside of The United Methodist church are facing. Local congregations may know of a student in their congregation who is struggling to go to college.

The time for giving is now. While the suggested date for United Methodist Student Day is November 29, offering for UM Student Day, and for all of the Special Sundays, can be made throughout the year.

**"My world is so small, and by participating in these offerings, I help people who are beyond my limited reach. Special Sundays are an opportunity for me to walk the talk," said one parishioner.**

*for anything and everything, more than just ready to do what needs to be done." —2 Corinthians 9:7-8, The Message*





## Human Relations Day

**January 17, 2010**

*"Say no to wrong. Learn to do good. Work for justice.  
Help the down-and-out. Stand up for the homeless.  
Go to bat for the defenseless." Isaiah 1:17, The Message*

The Human Relations Day offering strengthens outreach to communities in the United States and Puerto Rico, encouraging social justice and work with at-risk youth.

Human Relations Day occurs during Epiphany, the season of manifesting God's light to the world. The day encourages better human relations by affirming the dignity, self-determination and interdependence of individuals and communities.

This day of social action and raising awareness aims to heal social ills at the national level. Three initiatives benefit from the offering: Community Developers, United Methodist Voluntary Services (UMVS) and the Youth Offender Rehabilitation Program.

United Methodists celebrate Human Relations Day on the Sunday preceding the birthday observance of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. The juxtaposition of these two very special days is not a coincidence. The United Methodist *Book of Discipline* describes the purpose of Human Relations Day as a call to "the Church to recognize the right of all God's children in realizing their potential as human beings in relationship with each other."

Through the Community Developers program, United Methodist churches assist ministries in racial-ethnic United Methodist congregations and communities throughout the United States.

Local congregations initiate the work of a community developer, create effective responses to specific community needs, create a network of community developers that assist each other, and provide training and resources for them. These congregations make systemic changes that allow them to provide services in their communities, ranging from such topics as education, substance abuse, employment training, affordable housing, at-risk youth programs, HIV/AIDS testing and counseling, and much more.

Through United Methodist Voluntary Services, the General Board of Global Ministries seeks to support grass-roots organizations that work through youth and young adult volunteers to challenge oppression and injustice and to improve the lives and fulfill the potential of those whom Jesus called the "least of these."

## Human Relations Day

### Lives Transformed

#### **Jobs for Life program helps turn lives around in Little Rock, Arkansas**

Drugs and alcohol once had a tenacious grip on Maury Wilson. Today, he says happily, "I have clarity in my life."

Jobs for Life, a Little Rock, Ark., ministry supported by United Methodist gifts on Human Relations Day, motivated Wilson to turn his life around.

"Instead of looking for a job, I can work on my career," he notes. In recovery, Wilson is developing a plan to fulfill his life-long goal of obtaining a degree in nursing.

Wilson entered the Hoover Center substance-abuse treatment program in September 2008 and enrolled in Jobs for Life. Recalling his journey from substance abuse to hope for the future, Wilson says, "I was going against my natural instinct to live."

On December 3, nine students celebrated their achievement at the 14th Jobs for Life graduation. One of two valedictorians named by his peers, Wilson spoke at the ceremony. "It's an honor," Wilson admits proudly, adding, "This program is not for those who need it, but for those who want it."

Based at Theresa Hoover UMC, Black Community Developers Inc. (BCD) coordinates Jobs for Life, an eight-week national jobs-training and life-skills course, designed for persons who are displaced and underserved.

BCD's motto is "Rebuilding lives and Restoring Communities." Thanks to the Human Relations Day offering and other contributions, Wilson and others have a chance to reach their God-given potential.

#### **Wide range of programs**

#### **supported by Human Relations Day offering**

First held in 1972, Human Relations Day makes it possible for communities to transform. The offering helps church-based community developers work in racial- and ethnic-minority communities in the United States and Puerto Rico. It also maintains a network of grassroots social-justice organizations and ensures a second chance for youth offenders. Programs supported through the receipts of the Human Relations Day offering include, but are not limited to:

- HIV/AIDS
- Affordable Housing
- Youth Empowerment/Initiatives
- Mental and Physical Health
- Youth Leadership
- Older Adult Assistance
- Restorative Justice
- Prison Ministries
- After-School and Summer Initiatives



As a Community Developer, 25-year-old Delia Ramirez is called to help others realize their potential. It is where the homeless find a bed, where the hungry find a meal, where the vulnerable find safety.

For the first 6 years of her life, Delia lived in the homeless community that is a ministry of Humboldt Park UMC, Chicago. Today, as executive director of The Center for Changing Lives, she conducts business in the same room her parents used as a bedroom when they lived in the facility and exchanged work services for rent. "I have always known my calling in life was to work with the oppressed," she said. "It doesn't matter where we work, what we do, how many degrees we have or where we grew up. What matters is having the willingness to serve God in the most unusual places."

"My passion for this work lives because I understand I cannot call myself a Christian if I live blinded by the [situations] that surround me," Delia adds.

United Methodists believe in the development of better human relations and seek to empower others to become the whole persons God intended. Every one of God's children deserves justice and equality. Every one of God's children deserves to open doors to success.

Learn more about the Community Developers program at <http://new.bgbm-umc.org/about/us/cim/programs/developers/>.

**For more information visit [www.umcsgiving.org/hrd](http://www.umcsgiving.org/hrd)**



# calendar ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Finding Jesus on Facebook

The Conference Safe Sanctuaries Committee is sponsoring a series of workshops for adults in ministry among children and youth entitled "Finding Jesus on Facebook."

The workshop will address issues of cybersafety as well as ministry among the Internet generation. Participants will receive materials to use in working with other leaders and parents in their local churches.

There is no cost to attend the workshop although anyone planning to attend should notify Robin Harry (rharry@nccumc.org) about the attendance date and location. The workshop will be held on Saturday mornings from 10 a.m. to 12 noon as follows: Oct. 17 at Jarvis Memorial UMC in Greenville; Nov. 7 at Haymount UMC in Fayetteville; and Nov. 21 at Soapstone UMC in Raleigh.

More information about the workshop and how to register plans to attend can be found at [www.nccumc.org/children/safe-sanctuaries/](http://www.nccumc.org/children/safe-sanctuaries/).

## Mission Team to Jamaica

The Rev. Butch Huffman, NC Conference individual mission volunteer, will lead an NC Conference mission work team to Content Gap, Jamaica, Nov. 3-12 to work on the roof which was blown off during a hurricane in 2007.

Orientation for the team will be held at a time and place to be announced. The total cost of the trip is \$1,000/person. Those interested in being on this team or wanting more information should contact Butch Huffman, 919-931-4304 (cell) or [butchhuffman@bydasea.net](mailto:butchhuffman@bydasea.net)

## Deadlines Set for Youth Programs

By Aug. 31, applications for the following aspects of Pilgrimage must be received by the Office of Youth Ministries. Contact [senicholson@nccumc.org](mailto:senicholson@nccumc.org):

- ♦ House band members must complete an application (audition also required)
- ♦ Youth groups with an act of worship to offer (send description and adult contact information)
- ♦ Youth seeking to offer a testimony (submit the testimony in writing with the recommendation of a pastor/youth leader)
- ♦ DVDs to be shown must be submitted by Aug. 31.
- ♦ Award of Excellence in Youth Ministry applications are available at [www.nccumc.org/youth](http://www.nccumc.org/youth) or by calling the Office of Youth Ministries

## Convocation on the Black Church to be held in September

"Can These Dry Bones Live?" a Convocation on the Black Church will be held Sept. 18-19 at Hay Street UMC in Fayetteville. Sponsored by the conference Committee on Strengthening the Black Church, the event will include sessions about Risk-Taking Mission through Evangelism and Outreach and Revitalizing the Church. For more information and to access a registration form, go to <http://nccumc.org/multicultural/files/bc09.pdf>.

## Abrahamic Faiths Unite for Peace at Peace Conference

The Lake Junaluska Peace Conference, Sept. 20-22, will offer a dialogue of better understanding of the faith communities of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Speakers from each faith will describe what their scriptures and practices have to bring to the Table of Peace.

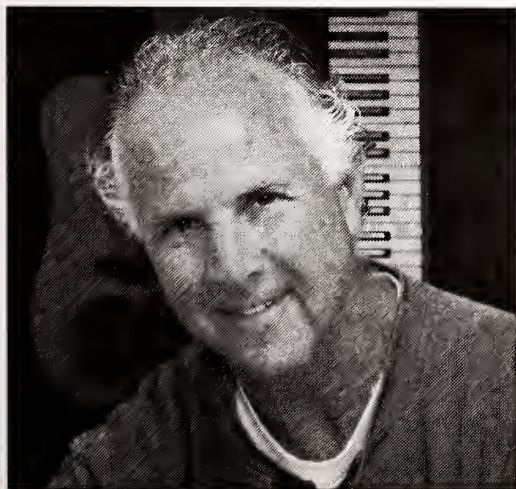
"There is much agreement that we will not have world-wide peace until the major religions understand each other better and develop genuine respect for one other. As we focus this year on the three Abrahamic Faiths, come expecting to be challenged by the presenters. Come with an open mind and an eagerness to enter into creative dialogue with persons of other faiths," Garland Young, chair of the Planning Committee, said. Leadership for the event includes:

- ♦ Archbishop Elias Chacour, Archbishop Metropolitan of the Melkite Diocese of Akka, Haifa, Nazareth, and all of Galilee in Israel, and a strong voice for peace and reconciliation in Palestine and Israel.
- ♦ Rabbi Arthur O. Waskow has been one of the creators and leaders of Jewish renewal and of several important interfaith projects addressing issues of peace, justice, and healing of the Earth.
- ♦ Dr. Sayyid M. Syeed, National Director of Interfaith and Community Alliances for the Islamic Society of North America, has been actively involved in fostering understanding among the world's religions and has participated in interfaith dialogues at different levels.
- ♦ Dr. Lisa Schirch, professor of peace-building at E. Mennonite Univ. in Harrisonburg, VA.

Cost for the conference is \$89 (\$79 before August 1, 2009) and \$65 for students. Register online at [www.lakejunaluska.com/peace.aspx](http://www.lakejunaluska.com/peace.aspx) or by phone (828) 454-6656. Lodging reservations can be made at [www.lakejunaluska.com/peace.aspx](http://www.lakejunaluska.com/peace.aspx) or by calling 1-800-222-4930. Please let the representative know that the reservations are for the Peace Conference.

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*An Alternative Way To Travel With Someone You Can Trust*





By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

## September 6, 2009

**Text: Joshua 1**

**"Joshua: A Leader for the People"**

"Smith fades back to pass; he unleashes a long, long pass to Henderson. Touchdown! I tell you, Smith is a real leader for this team."

... "In a time of crisis, Governor Webster stepped forward and was a real leader for her state."

... "The President reported that his diplomatic conversations led him to believe that the leader of the revolution was causing bloodshed, starvation, and abuse among the people of Klockenspiel."

... "We had an amazing golf tournament, but when I looked up at the leader board, there was no surprise: Tiger Woods was in front, eight strokes under par."

... "Who's the leader of the club that's made for you and me? M-I-C-K-E-Y M-O-U-S-E!"

This week's lesson is about Joshua as a leader. But, as we can tell from these opening sentences, "leader" can mean many different things.

Is it one who inspires? Is it one who gets results? Is it one who does better than anyone else? Is it someone who offers a clear vision? Is it someone who demands action? Is it a guide through life's thickets? (Or is it a biped mouse with major auditory receptors?!) Joshua 1 contains multiple images

of what a leader does or what a leader is like: (1) Go, do something (1:2); (2) no one can overcome (1:5); (3) strong (1:6 7, 9, 17); (4) courageous (1:6, 7, 9, 17); careful to obey (1:7); (5) successful (1:7); (6) meditate (1:8); (7) fearless (1:9); (8) confidence (1:9); (9) commanded (1:10); (10) prepare (1:11); (11) remember (1:13)

That's quite a load to put on a man who has just learned (Joshua 1:2) that he is now the leader of his people! Joshua is able to lead not because he created a new direction for Israel, but because he clarified and saw the implications of the vision God had originally given the escaping slaves: a Promised Land.

Leadership is not to be measured by how novel or inventive one is. (Alas, a pastor might say "I must be a leader because I am not doing anything the way my predecessor did.")

Leadership is to be measured by understanding what is needed at a particular point in the journey.

A quick glance at Joshua 1 reveals that leadership does not always look the same. Sometimes it stays the course. Sometimes it moves back to what used to be. Sometimes it takes the next step. But, it always does what is appropriate to the moment.

Joshua's role was not the same as Moses' role, but it was right for the moment.

### What Someone Else Has Said:

In the novel *Radio Romance* (Faber and Faber), Garrison Keillor has one of his characters remember something William Safire wrote: "The inconceivable becomes the inevitable: that's leadership."

# September <sup>adult</sup> BIBLE STUDY

Based on the scripture lessons of Cokesbury's *Adult Bible Studies* series.

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "What now, Lord...?"

## September 13, 2009

**Text: Judges 6:1-3, 7-14**

**"Gideon: A Deliverer for the People"**

Don't be like Gideon.

That might seem like strange advice if all you have read of the Gideon story are these few verses from the sixth chapter of Judges.

Here we have a happy ending story: (1) Israel needs help (Judges 6:7); (2) God sends help (Judges 6:8); (3) Gideon is called to help God (Judges 6:14). That is good stuff...and not only that, but Gideon and his army won the day against the idolatrous Midianites (Judges 7:24-25).

Although it is a violent and gory triumph, Gideon has, with the help of God, gotten the job done. But, I repeat: don't be like Gideon.

Gideon was a deliverer of the people of Israel and that's good, but don't be like Gideon. Gideon did what God asked him to do and that's good, but don't be like Gideon. Gideon refused when the people tried to make him king and that is good, but don't be like Gideon.

Don't be like Gideon because of something that is told later in the Book of Judges.

Look at Judges 8:22-28. After all of these victories for the Lord, Gideon had a moment of backsliding.

After all of the ways in which Gideon opened himself to the Lord's leading, this hero succumbed to pride

and ego. He had all the people bring the golden earrings they had stolen from their enemies; he melted down the gold and made an ephod (usually a kind of metallic apron) and, as the King James Version says in its uncleaned-up language, "The people went a whoring after it" (Judges 8:27). "It became a snare (a noose, a trap) to Gideon and his people" (Judges 8:27).

The people began to pay homage to this golden symbol, instead of honoring the God whose triumph the symbol represented.

Don't be like Gideon.

But, take heart. The biblical witness is that the people lived in peace ("the land had rest" Judges 8:28) for the remaining forty years of Gideon's life. It does end on a good note (even though the people relapsed after Gideon's death).

These chapters help us see that God uses ordinary people (Judges 6:15) who do not always want to do God's will (Judges 6:15) and who sometimes fall into the brokenness of pride and self-focus (Judges 8:27). These are the sort that God uses. These are like us. God can use us.

Don't be like Gideon? Well, maybe you ought to be available as Gideon, as faithful as Gideon, and as determined as Gideon. Just don't make any ephods.

### What Someone Else Has Said:

In *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (Beacon Hill Press), John Wesley wrote: "Formerly we thought, one saved from sin could not fall; now we know the contrary."

See "Bible study," page 13



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# September adult Bible study *continued from page 12*

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Love, You lifted me..."

## September 20, 2009

**Text: Ezra 9:5-11, 15**

**"Ezra: A Priest for the People"**

When the Hebrew people began to return home after generations in the Babylonian exile, they did not all come back at once. It took over a hundred years for the homecoming to be completed.

Ezra was the leader of one of these stages of return. He did not like what he found when he got back home. Some of those who had stayed in Jerusalem during the exile had diluted their exclusive loyalty to God by forming families with Canaanites, Hittites, Ammonites, Moabites, and Egyptians.

Ezra was outraged. What he did forms the study text for this week: Ezra 9:5-11, 15.

He confessed on behalf of the people. Even though Ezra was not personally guilty of the sin he lamented, he so identified with the people that their sin became his to confess.

In many settings, we have lost the ingredient of confession in our worship experiences. One can only wonder if a constant theme of praise without any dimension of confession is one way we try to divert attention from our sin!

In Ezra 9:6, Ezra says he is "ashamed and embarrassed." The King James Version has Ezra saying, "I am ashamed and blush." (Mark Twain said, "The human being is the only animal that can blush or needs to.")

Interestingly enough, the Hebrew word translated "ashamed" has its roots in a word that means "to become pale." Blushing and becoming pale: that about covers it!

It is anything except business as usual.

Confession is a way of opening ourselves to the forgiving and healing gifts of God.

Because God is holy, we who are unholy seem out of place in God's presence. To confess is both to take seriously the sin in our lives and to take seriously God's story of faithfulness and covenant love.

The confession of Ezra is in the context of remembering how God has been faithful (Ezra 9:8-9).

Ezra does not quit his role as leader just because he is part of a community of failure. Ezra does not let his place and position of influence shape his truth-telling. He is a model of what Janice Catron has called "a mature leader."

Of course, later Jonah and Ruth challenge Ezra's exclusivity, but there is enough sin to go around.

## What Someone Else Has Said:

D. P. McGeachy III has written (*The Gospel According to Andy Capp*, John Knox Press) "...For the Christian, confession is a healthy exercise. It isn't wallowing in sin, or feeling sorry for oneself; rather, it is looking straight at self, and accepting God's forgiveness."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Ashamed and blushing, I come before You, O Lord..."

## September 27, 2009

**Text: Nehemiah 2: 5, 11-20**

**"Nehemiah: A Motivator for the People"**

The name "Nehemiah" means "Yahweh comforts." It's a good name for this royal governor who gave credit to God for the good things, the comfort, in his life (Nehemiah 2:18).

Remember that the word "comfort" does not just mean offering soft words of support ("There, there, you poor, dear thing!"); the word "comfort" means "with strength," so to say that "Yahweh comforts" is to say that "God strengthens."

In this week's study text we see how Nehemiah got started on the project of rebuilding the security wall around Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:17). He got permission from King Artaxerxes I (Nehemiah 2:6), a reminder that God is able to use non-believers in getting God's work done. (John Wesley said that God's prevenient grace was at work in all.)

Then, once he got to Jerusalem, Nehemiah did not jump in with both feet, screaming "I have the answer!" He moved with caution, checking

out the breaks in the wall by taking a night time tour (Nehemiah 2:12).

Once we have a vision of what God is calling the Church to do, the temptation for many of us is to expect everyone to jump on board immediately. Solid change sometimes comes for those who are patient, not those who race too far ahead of those who are expected to follow.

Finally, Nehemiah invites other to join him in the rebuilding task (Nehemiah 2:17). Now is it their project, not just Nehemiah's dream.

They "buy in" on the effort because it is for the "common good" (Nehemiah 2:18). The word "good" is the same word used in Genesis, when God looks at what God has created and sees that it "good" (Genesis 1:10, for example).

One nuance of the word "good" is to mean "suited to its purpose." Nehemiah has offered a cause that will benefit all, not just a privileged few.

But there is opposition (Nehemiah 2:19). Isn't it sad that there are always some who lose out on the blessing (Nehemiah 2:20) because the assignment is not their idea?

As someone once said, "Noah had finally to close the door when the unicorns would not get on board the ark."

Nehemiah had to move ahead, leading this building mission even though some resisted.

The study text ends with Nehemiah giving God the credit for the victory (Nehemiah 2:20). What else do we expect from a man whose name means "God strengthens!"

## What Someone Else Has Said:

In *The Come Back Congregation* (Abingdon Press), Randy Frazee has said: "Fans are attracted by magnetic personalities. Followers rally around challenges that are expressed in a plan with a detailed strategy."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Where to, Lord?..."

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## Commentary: Christian Life Council *continued from page 6*

LC community on how to love our environment.

We also had a time of fellowship and fun through spiritual music and socialization at a Jesus Jam.

During the entire Week of Love, we promoted our various activities and projects such as the American Red Cross blood drive slated for the following week in Louisburg College's Benson Chapel. Due to the CLC's campaign, the American Red Cross accepted nearly fifty pints of blood all donated by Louisburg College faculty, staff, and students.

The majority of CLC's activities for the 2008-2009 academic year focused on raising money for the Water for LIFE International Foundation. Water for LIFE installs water drills in even the most unfertile terrain of Africa, Asia, and South America in order to provide drinkable water to the less fortunate.

With 2,000 wells established throughout the world, the foundation's main goal is to bring Christ closer to those who need Him through the blessing of fresh water. The CLC presented a substantial financial contribution to the foundation in order to help our extended family in Africa.

Donations had been gathered throughout the year, mainly from monies raised by CLC Lock-Ins. These bashes helped to pull in the local community and all of them received wonderful receptions from guests who described the Lock-Ins as fun, lively, and eventful.

The College held one of its most powerful worship services in our Chapel during Alumni Weekend this past spring. A total of four students gave their testimonies at the service

and allowed the entire community to reflect on relationships, religion, and the restless love we all hold for each other and our family foundation.

Our alumni built the foundation for the CLC...the family established long ago, when the Lord knew what He would have to do in order to bring His sons and daughters into the College.

He also led a group of fifteen CLC sisters and brothers to the seminar for the legislative summit in Raleigh on March 31st, sponsored by the North Carolina Council of Churches. CLC members from Louisburg College were considered as one of the largest and the youngest groups represented. During this legislative seminar, we actively learned about issues affecting our world and our own churches and families.

Our final community service project was held on April 25 on the LC campus. CLC members participated in the Race of Grace Weekend by volunteering at the TOUR DE GRACE, a bike tour sponsored by the Raleigh District.

CLC students provided support during this event by designing visuals for the riders to begin their journeys through Franklin County. Members of the Council also accepted donations for a local food drive and shoes for the needy to inspire others to join in the tour.

Much of the Race of Grace focused on God's exhilarating power in our lives, and the volunteer service itself was one of the most active of all the CLC events.

The biggest part of our journey, however, has remained behind the scenes. 8:30 in the morning... every morning...lunch time every Tuesday...weekly meetings to plan and dream and act...daily prayers...late nights spent drafting speeches and creating handouts and studying scripture. This list is just part of what each team leader of the CLC had to commit to each and every week.

This past spring, the CLC "mother," the Rev. Gloria Winston Harris, presented all of the team leaders with plaques in recognition of the hard

work put into the events this past year.

As the good Lord walked on the clear, blue water, so have all of our aspirations and dreams been skimming the line between full realization and the red-hot hands of Hades' lackluster and lame attempts at dreams deferred.

Now that the school year has ended, I can only look back at the Father who has led us from the fall into the spring and at the "mother-like" figure who has guided us on our journey this past year.

I could not complete any piece on the CLC without mentioning the glorious work of Chaplain Gloria. I could not complete any story without giving the ending...or, in this case, the beginning.

Though no one focal point should ever lay on one person's shoulders when the Lord is involved, Chaplain Gloria has changed the lives of every single student, staff member, and individual she has touched. She embodies the Christ-like figure within us all with her brightness. Whether it be in her smile or her deeds, she is the calming presence calling us home from the maelstrom. She is the final poppy in a field of frozen weeds. She thrives within the chapel walls and she challenges us to live out our dreams - whether we believe enough in ourselves to want to or not.

And she -- the mother, the confi-

dant, the teacher, and, simply, the beloved of so many -- will be moving on in her journey for Christ outside of Louisburg College.

Beginning July 1, Chaplain Gloria continued her own personal journey by serving as Associate Pastor of Saint Francis United Methodist Church in Cary.

With the Lord and with the family Chaplain Gloria has established as the foundation for some new sacred shoes to walk the campus of Louisburg College, it will be done. His plan is already completed. His children are already chosen. And His family, as big or as small as it may seem, is already prepared to walk the sunrises of tomorrow and take the challenges of today two at a time.

For when a pair walks into that dark night of scarlet glow and steel-like stars, the world is whole again. Our mission to share God's love has been a night of wraithlike shadows and howls to the moon, but we face the darkness together.

Two are better than one. Though a single star falls out of view, the rest will stand by patiently.

Our family is a constellation long established, yet so exponentially powerful to every onlooker.

Be one of those onlookers. Look to Louisburg College's Christian Life Council.

*\* Brittany Hunt is a student at Louisburg College.*

### BIRTHS

Christopher Isaac Moore, son of Greg (RA: All Saints') and Molly Moore was born June 12.

Nathan James Chryst, son of Philip (DU: Warren's Grove) and DeAnne Chryst was born on June 13.

### DEATH

HAMILTON, Riley T. Hamilton (RA:retired) died June 19. A service was held on June 22 in Raleigh.

## Committee assesses life of church

UMNS - A steering committee is helping reorder the life of The United Methodist Church.

Named by the denomination's Council of Bishops, the 18-member committee is making a fresh assessment of the church's life.

The task is to generate proposals that will help the denomination become more effective and accountable, particularly in light of the economic situation.

In May, the Council of Bishops issued A Call to Action, which

included the request that a committee would guide the denomination's response to furthering aligning the church's mission and its four areas of focus.

"We have a vision of a church that is vital, growing, diverse, relevant, appealing to youth and young adults, and engaged in effective, life-changing ministry--but we're limited by an outdated organizational structure," said Bishop Larry Goodpaster, project director and president-elect of the Council of Bishops.

### Church mice



Karl Zorowski



# around the CONFERENCE



## United Methodist youth leaders participate in Leading Edge Leadership Academy

Greensboro College celebrated the 15th year of the Leading Edge Leadership Academy. The academy, which took place in June, provided an opportunity for high school youth to spend a weekend focused on developing leadership skills. The students, mostly United Methodists, came from across North Carolina to participate in this weekend of team building experiences, workshops and community engagement.

This year the students attended workshops presented by faculty and staff of Greensboro College that included topics such as "Emotional Intelligence and Leadership" and "Service and Leadership."

Along with the workshops, students participated in leadership building experiences, small group exercises and chapel services. Participants also engaged in a community service project making blankets for youth and children in need.

"Through this weekend youth gain

greater awareness and skills about leadership, so they might continue to lead in their schools, communities and churches," said Robert Brewer, campus minister. "I have great hope for the future because of the leaders that come through this program."

The Leading Edge Leadership Academy occurs every summer on the campus of Greensboro College for high school students. For more information about how youth can benefit from this academy, contact Brewer at 336-272-7102, ext. 597.

## College Scholarships for Swansboro UMC Youth

Families and friends celebrated as college-bound Methodist youth received \$500 scholarships each from the Swansboro United Methodist Men during their 2009 scholarship & recognition dinner. The speaker for the evening was Dr. John Tyson, Senior Pastor of Swansboro UMC. This year's scholarship recipients and their colleges are: Anna Blue, University of North Carolina Pembroke; Jacob Nightingale, Colorado School of Mines; Jordan Provost, University of North Carolina Wilmington; Joshua Laws, East Carolina University; Kasey Kellum, University of North Carolina Wilmington; and Kristel Harlacher, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. Pictured from left to right are Kristel Harlacher, Kasey Kellum, and Anna Blue. Jacob Nightingale, Jordan Provost, and Joshua Laws were unable to attend the event.



## conference CALENDAR

### August

- 3, 10, 17 Grant Writing Workshops  
Westminster UMC, Kinston  
9:30am-3:30pm
- 6 Advocate Advisory  
Committee meeting, 2pm,  
United Methodist Building
- 16 Golden Cross Sunday  
(See page 4)
- 22 DISCIPLE Bible Outreach  
Ministry Training/  
Re-certification,  
10am-4pm, Jamestown  
UMC near Greensboro
- 23 DISCIPLE Bible Outreach  
Ministry Sunday  
(See page 4)

### September

- 12 Conference UMW  
Executive Committee,  
9:30am, Millbrook UMC,  
Raleigh
- 13 Legacy Building Sunday
- 15 Bishops Day Apart
- 18-19 Convocation on the Black  
Church, Hay Street UMC,  
Fayetteville
- 18-20 Mother Child Retreat,  
Camp Don Lee
- 22 Academy for Leadership  
Excellence Days of  
Learning, Haymount UMC,  
Fayetteville

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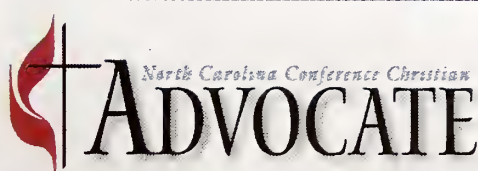
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largest size and highest resolution possible. Send in JPEG or TIFF formats. Articles and photos must be sent in separate files; photos cannot be embedded in articles or in photo viewing programs. See page 4 for information on submitting other types of information to the Advocate.



# 'John 10:10 Challenge' calls people of faith to work together for health-care reform

UMNS — United Methodists are invited to participate in the "John 10:10 Challenge" to raise the faith community's voice in support of comprehensive U.S. health-care reform.

The challenge, issued by the General Board of Church & Society (GBCS), is based on Jesus' declaration that he came so all "may have life, and have it abundantly."

A website, [www.1010challenge.org](http://www.1010challenge.org), contains resources to enable persons to be informed, engaged and empowered to begin advocacy for U.S. health-care reform.

The United Methodist Church states in its Social Principles (§162.V) that it believes health care is "a basic human right."

Last year, the denomination's highest policy-making body, the General Conference, adopted a resolution that supports a single-payer system.

That resolution, #3201 in the 2008 *Book of Resolutions*, urges United Methodists to exert influence

through all structures and means "to connectionally advocate and fervently lobby the federal government for the adoption and implementation of a totally nonprofit health-insurance system, a single-payer system administered by the federal government."

More than 47 million people are without health care in this country, and 14,000 people are losing their coverage daily, according to both health-care industry and congressional estimates.

While the U.S. Congress deliberates on health-care reform, the 10:10 Challenge will enable the faith community to learn about details under consideration, start dialogues around reform, and to act on behalf of the United Methodist witness that health care is a basic human right.

The 10:10 Challenge website offers a "justice-filled prescription for health care."

People who visit the site are asked to make a commitment to take action in the next 10 weeks to help convince

Congress that reform is necessary.

The website offers 10 actions that persons who accept the challenge can choose to take during these 10 intensive weeks of congressional advocacy.

Actions are suitable for individuals or groups, such as United Methodist Women or Men, youth fellowships or Sunday school classes.

The website encourages persons to start a team challenge and invite others to join to commit to being a part of health-care reform.

## Ways to Take Action

Suggested actions include:

- ♦ Signing a "Prescription for Health-care Reform." The petition will be forwarded to the White House and Congress. The petition gives a strong endorsement to a public option to insure everyone.
- ♦ Conducting a Health-care Justice Sabbath. The website contains a suggested worship service, including litanies, prayers and Bible verses.

♦ Holding prayer vigils. The website offers an enhanced prayer service that supports the United Methodist position on health-care reform.

♦ Contacting members of Congress. The website includes scripts that feature faith-based messaging.

The website is predicated on United Methodist principles that health care should be inclusive, available, accessible and accountable for all. The site states: "As people of faith, we envision a society where each person is afforded health, wholeness and human dignity."

A one-page 10:10 Challenge overview is available in .pdf format.

For more information about the 10:10 Challenge or United Methodist positions on comprehensive health-care reform, contact the Rev. Cynthia Abrams, director of GBCS's work area on Alcohol, Other Addictions & Health Care, (202) 488-5636 or by e-mail to [cabrams@umc-gbcs.org](mailto:cabrams@umc-gbcs.org).

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Director of Communications



**Camp & Retreat Ministries:  
Forming the Inside  
Outside**  
Pages 7-10

# Lutherans approve full communion with United Methodists

By Linda Bloom \*

Celebrating with a Charles Wesley hymn, the largest Lutheran body in the United States entered into full communion with The United Methodist Church.

Delegates to the churchwide assembly of the 4.7 million-member Evangelical Lutheran Church in America sang "O, For a Thousand Tongues to Sing" on Aug. 20 after voting 958-51 in support of the historic agreement.

After the vote, Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson hugged Bishop Gregory Palmer, president of the United Methodist Council of Bishops, and thanked all who had labored in dialogue between the religious traditions founded by towering figures in Christian history – Martin Luther and John Wesley.

"You have taken up centuries of differences and found centuries of commonalities," he declared.

United Methodists last year gave their overwhelming approval to the agreement in an 864-19 vote at the 2008 General Conference in Fort

*See “Full communion,” page 5*

# Chestnut Ridge celebrates 50 years of camping excellence

By Dail D. Ballard \*

Summer 2009 marked “50 Years of Summer Camp Excellence” at Chestnut Ridge Camp & Retreat Center. On Saturday, July 25, in celebration of 50 years of summer camping, Chestnut Ridge hosted an afternoon festival complete with music and activities for families and friends. Afternoon festivities were followed by a celebratory sit-down dinner in the Morris Center.

Throughout the afternoon, hundreds of guests enjoyed the grounds of Chestnut Ridge. Many swam, some ventured onto Lake Fellowship in a canoe or kayak, and others gathered around the campfire circle for conversation, hot dogs, and s'mores.

The music of Method 33, Psalm Pilots, and Creedmoor filled the air with great rhythm, creating a festive and celebratory atmosphere for all. "It was a great afternoon, with great people in one of my favorite places," said Martha Taylor, a volunteer camp nurse and camper parent.

"I want to stay all summer," added her son, Peter.

*See "Chestnut Ridge celebrates," page 7*



**(L-R) Bishop Al Gwinn and his wife, Joyce, learn about Chestnut Ridge's Community Farm from Chris Burtner, Community Farm manager and Bobby Harris, executive director of NC UM Camp & Retreat Ministries.**

**A musician playing the bagpipes called those gathered for the 50th anniversary celebration to the meal at the Morris Center filled with harvests from the camp's gardens.**



# Learning, healing together

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." — Luke 4:18-19*

By Trish Archer \*

Releasing captives, offering recovery, freeing the oppressed — this continues to be the mission of Jesus and the call of the Church. The faces of the captives and the oppressed are the faces of young and old, rich and poor — many held captive by addiction.

September is National Recovery Month, and 2009 marks the 20th anniversary of this national observance.

The theme of the month is 'Join the Voices for Recovery: Together We Learn, Together We Heal'. The United Methodist Church is among many organizations partnering with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to address the growing problems of addiction.

The statistics are alarming: "Of the 23.2 million people who needed treatment for substance use disorders, only 3.9 million people received it in 2007. An estimated 93.6% of people with substance use disorders who needed treatment did not receive it because they felt they

See "Recovery Month," page 5

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After two years of planning, McMannen UMC in Durham hosted 21 youth and adult leaders from Georgia, Florida and North and South Carolina in a week long work camp in June that was the first of its kind in the North Carolina Conference.

## Salkehatchie Summer of Service program for youth comes to the North Carolina Conference

By Ceil Matthews \*

On June 13, McMannen UMC in Durham hosted 21 youth and adult leaders from Georgia, Florida and North and South Carolina in a week-long work camp that was the first of its kind in the North Carolina Conference.

These volunteers repaired two houses in Durham during the week, worshipped and fellowshiped together, all as part of the Salkehatchie Summer of Service, a mission supported by its participants, the communities it serves, and the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

McMannen's camp received further support through a grant from the NCC Youth Service Fund and a church-wide fund raising project.

Salkehatchie Summer Service was founded in South Carolina in 1978 by the Rev. John W. Culp, an ordained United Methodist minister. For that first year, a group of 40 United Methodists, most of them between the ages of 14 and 18, left their comfortable pews and stepped into the lives of four families affected by some of the worst poverty in America.

In the summer of 2002, the 25th anniversary year, the South Carolina Conference sponsored 36 Salkehatchie Summer Service camps involving 2,396 adult and youth missionaries at 216 homes. At each camp, the youth live together for seven days, working in small groups by day, and sharing reflections and building community by night.

Salkehatchie: Durham took over the entire McMannen church campus. Participants slept in the Education Building and Scout Hut; ate and relaxed in the Fellowship Hall and Youth Center, worshipped in the Sanctuary and used the MERCI center portable showers to clean up after long hot days rehabilitating the two homes in east Durham.

Several area churches; Resurrection UMC, Bethany UMC, Asbury Temple UMC, as well as Watts Street Baptist Church and The Summit Church-West Club Campus, assisted in preparing and serving noonday meals. The McMannen UM Men prepared breakfast every morning at 6 a.m. to allow the campers to get an early start and beat the heat, and the McMannen Girl Scouts and other McMannen groups prepared, served

and cleaned up at evening meals.

Gray Southern, Durham District Superintendent, celebrated Holy Communion at the closing worship service on Friday evening.

McMannen Youth started participating in Salkehatchie at Camden, SC about nine years ago. They were some of the first campers at Huntersville, NC in 2003 (in the Western NC Conference) and three years ago at the first camp in Shelby, also in the Western North Carolina Conference.

Their leaders recognized the value of these camps to the youth and began planning to bring one of these camps to Durham two years ago.

After two years of work and planning, the dream became a reality on June 13 as the youth arrived in Durham, and the work of building—houses, community, friendships and relationships—began.

On June 20, as weary campers said their goodbyes, plans and dreams for Salkehatchie: Durham 2010 were already underway.

\* Ceil Matthews is Coordinator of Ministries at McMannen UMC. Additional reporting contributed by the Rev. Larry Bowden and Larry Hawkey.

## Church Mice

Karl Zorowski



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# Today's church developers can learn from early evangelists

By Elliott Wright \*

UMNS - Can Methodists learn anything about effective Christian evangelism from their denomination's founding period 250 years ago?

"Yes," says a Duke University professor, who told 600 church developers how the Wesley brothers, John and Charles, gave rise to a movement that swept the young United States of America.

"Early Methodism was evangelistic," the Rev. Lacey Warner explained to the 2009 United Methodist School of Congregational Development in July. "When the Wesleys talked about spreading 'Scriptural holiness,' they meant evangelism." She defined evangelism as preaching the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ and "living it out."

One of the recurring themes at successive annual Schools of Congregational Development, which are sponsored by the United Methodist Boards of Discipleship and Global Ministries, is the decline in Methodist membership in the United States (and also in Britain, where it originated). Mission-founded expressions of the denomination in Africa, parts of Asia, and regions of Eastern Europe are growing.

## Reclaiming strengths

Numbers alone are not all that matters, said Warner, who holds a chair of evangelism at Duke Divinity School.

Among the qualities of early Methodism that could help the contemporary church reclaim its earlier strengths is the idea that growth in grace is as important as growth in numbers, and preoccupation with membership figures can become an obstacle to gospel proclamation, Warner said.

Other relevant qualities are the

beliefs theological reflection is essential, sustained Christian practices maintain the community of faith and wealth and material goods are meant to be shared.

The building blocks for the early Methodist movement included "classes" and "bands" that developed after people responded to Methodist preaching, often set in fields and other public spaces rather than in church buildings.

Classes were groups of 10 to 12 people organized by geographic location--neighborhoods--while bands were six to eight people who voluntarily came together for spiritual nurture.

There were two kinds of bands: "select" and "penitential" or "over-achievers" and "backsliders." But, when the lists of band members are examined, those who show up on the "select" list where once themselves among the "penitential," Warner said.

"The experience of sanctification was expected to take place in small groups," she continued, "but it didn't happen for all at the same pace. We have one record of it taking someone 48 years to experience sanctification." Growth in grace, the speaker said, was as important to the Wesleys as expanding membership rolls. The growth was steady but gradual.

People fed one another spiritually in the early Methodist movement; they kept personal journals that were shared. Not everyone stayed with the spiritual and social "discipline" that the Wesleys taught and practiced. Scriptural and "social holiness" were partners in the Wesleyan movement.

Warner indicated that membership loss started at the very beginning among those who did not share the vision.

## General Rules

Methodism has three "general rules" for putting faith into practice that date from the Wesleys, Warner said.

She said those rules are to do all the good one can, to avoid evil and to attend the ordinances of God, which include prayer, worship attendance, Bible reading, and fasting.

The Duke professor regretted that some contemporary evangelism seems more concerned with self-help tools than looking at the whole of life

John Wesley preaches in the meeting house of Mathew Bagshaw in Nottingham, England, in 1747. Art is courtesy of the UM Board of Global Ministries.



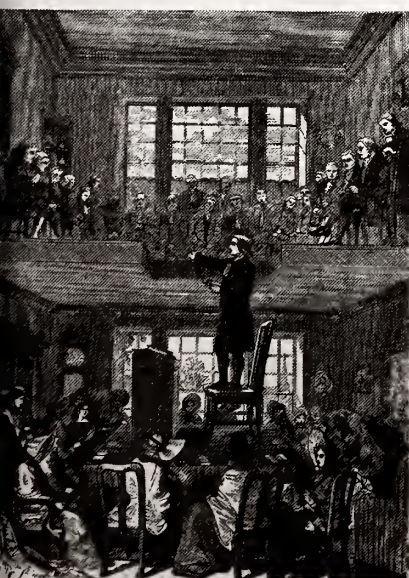
The Rev. Lacey Warner, of Duke Divinity School, says growth in grace was as important to the Wesleys as expanding membership rolls.

through the lens of the Gospel.

The early Methodist movement was composed in large part of women, the young, and the poor. Care for the poor was a major component in Wesley's ministry, and he criticized various industries and their owners by name for exploiting the poor and worked tirelessly to provide economic opportunities that would bring the poor to self-sufficiency.

Yet, Warner said, he did not believe that Methodists, or Christians, should accumulate more than was needed to care for oneself and the family. All unnecessary spending, he held, was not only stealing from the poor but also stealing from God, to whom everything belongs.

\* Elliott Wright is the information officer of the UM Board of Global Ministries.



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# A holistic approach to wellness

## A Commentary

*Editor's Note: This article originally ran in Faith & Leadership, the online magazine of Leadership Education at Duke Divinity and is based on research from the Clergy Health Initiative.*

By Rae Jean Proeschold-Bell \*

Pastors work within a complex web of relationships—peer, family, congregation and denomination among them—with sometimes-conflicting demands that have repercussions for pastors' vocation and health. In that web, new research shows, the influence of congregations and the denominational polity is so strong that pastors' efforts to be healthy are likely to be enhanced—or thwarted—by the institutions they serve.

This analysis of conversations with 88 United Methodist pastors and district superintendents, published in April in the *Journal of Religion and Health*, is the first to examine how to tailor health interventions to clergy. The findings make clear that programs to improve clergy health will succeed only if they address the multiple conditions that contribute to health, especially conditions created by congregations and denominational polities.

Concern for the health and wellness of Christian pastors, especially in mainline denominations, has been rising for a number of years. The problem has not been obvious to lay members in the pews, but it has not escaped notice of denominational leaders and researchers. Several church bodies began pastoral wellness programs in the 1980s and 1990s, but later studies showed these programs had not solved the problem.

A 2001 Pulpit & Pew research project revealed strikingly high rates of obesity in a nationwide survey of parish pastors. Dr. Gwen Halaas's 2002 study of ministerial wellness in

the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America described significant levels of stress, depression, and lifestyle-related physical ailments in ELCA pastors who, in her words, faced greater demands and less support than their predecessors. The Church Benefits Association's 2006 study of clergy in 10 Protestant denominations showed that clergy report more job demands, criticism and stress from criticism than do laity.

All of these factors contribute to rising health care costs, challenges retaining clergy, and decreased passion and effectiveness among the clergy who remain.

The Duke Clergy Health Initiative, funded by the Rural Church Division of The Duke Endowment, conducted a series of focus groups across North Carolina, with eight focus groups involving congregational pastors and three involving district superintendents. In all, 88 pastors and leaders participated and revealed several dozen factors that influence clergy health, which are listed here. This list offers a new and hopeful picture that lasting wellness can be achieved among clergy in the U.S.

### 'An impossible task'

Pastors, who define health comprehensively as a physical, mental and spiritual phenomenon, were highly attuned to the responsibility they have for their own health, and were quick to note in the focus groups their own shortcomings in such behaviors as regular exercise and healthful eating. However, they also indicated that congregant expectations that pastors be available 24/7 contribute to the challenge of being healthy.

"I think some of it's the moral imperative between the secular world and the church world," one pastor reported. "In the church, if I block off my schedule that I'm going

to exercise or I'm going to do this or this for me, even down to diet, when you're eating in people's homes and that sort of thing ...When you block this off, it's almost like you're being selfish and that's bad."

Pastors also said that many of their congregants do not understand the breadth and depth of their vocation. One pastor said congregants "are aware we work one hour on Sunday, and they don't realize [we work] the whole rest of the week. There's no such thing as a 40-hour week." Another pastor pointed out that "every person sitting in the pew has a separate job description for our job, and when you put it all together, it's an impossible task."

Pastors reported that some churches create stress for the pastor due to congregational conflict and unhealthy church dynamics. Pastors said situations in which one or more congregants use intimidation or abusive tactics to oppose the pastor are particularly harmful.

In contrast, participants also noted that support from churches can benefit their health: "It does depend upon whether the parish you're serving is healthy or not," one pastor said. "There are those that have healthy practices that have a tradition of being supportive of the pastor."

### Supervisors set the tone

Pastors also talked about the United Methodist Church's leadership structure, in which bishops oversee district superintendents who, in turn, supervise pastors. Those district superintendents, pastors said, can support their health by asking about their self-care and encouraging the practice of setting aside personal time. By their own description, though, district superintendents don't universally practice

See "A holistic approach," page 11

## DISCIPLE Outreach touches lives beyond NC

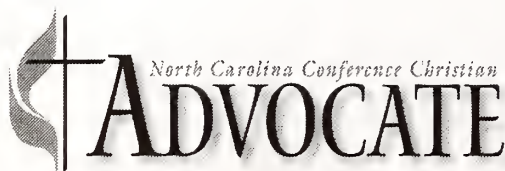
By Stephen Shytle \*

In recent months, the NC-based Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries (DBOM) has reached beyond the state to pastors in Peru, prison leaders in Pennsylvania and Delaware, and trainers in the Baltimore-Washington Conference.

Dr. Mark Hicks, Executive Director of DBOM, was invited by Bishop Jorge Bravo to accompany a team from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry to Peru. Although the GBHEM team went to Peru to help in the creation of a new seminary at the Methodist School of Peru, Hicks attended to provide DISCIPLE Bible training to 30 Methodist pastors. Bravo said that DISCIPLE, a Bible Study couched in the Wesleyan tradition, was an answer to their prayers. Following the training, Bravo received permission from the United Methodist Publishing House for the Methodist School in Peru to print and distribute the Spanish translation of DISCIPLE. Saul Espino, of the GBHEM, stated that this could pave the way for an explosion of DISCIPLE Bible Study throughout all of Latin America.

Hicks was invited by Bishop Peggy Johnson to provide training to pastors and lay people in the Eastern Pennsylvania and Delaware-Penninsula Conferences of the United Methodist Church. The train-

See "DISCIPLE," page 5



### Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org).

Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

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**Contact:** [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org) or (919) 832-9560 with any questions.



# Full communion with Lutheran church approved

continued from page 1

Worth, Texas. It is the first such agreement for United Methodists. The United Methodist Church has almost 8 million members in the United States and 11.5 million members worldwide.

Full communion means that each church acknowledges the other as a partner in the Christian faith, recognizes the authenticity of each other's baptism and Eucharist, observes the validity of their respective ministries and is committed to working together toward greater unity.

Such a relationship, according to the United Methodist Book of Discipline, means differences between the two denominations "are not church dividing."

Before discussion on the vote began, Palmer told the Lutheran body that he considered their bilateral engagement to be "deeply evangelistic work" that helps fulfill the desire of Jesus "that we might be one in order that the world might believe."

His audience appeared to agree. A motion to delay the vote until 2011 and refer it back to Hanson's office



Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (left) hugs United Methodist Bishop Gregory Palmer following the approval of a full communion agreement between the two denominations during the Lutheran body's Churchwide Assembly in Minneapolis. (A UMNS photo ©2009 ELCA News Service)

was soundly defeated. Several delegates then enthusiastically called for its passage.

Bishop Stephen Talmage, Grand Canyon Synod, told delegates that he was baptized in The United Methodist Church, where his sister remains an active member. But as the head of a large, rural territory, his interest in the full communion agreement is more than personal.

"This agreement ... will allow us to provide a pastoral presence, pastoral ministry in places that are hard to serve," he said.

In some locations, United Methodist and Lutheran pastors already are serving in each other's congregations. The agreement provides official backing and expands such opportunities.

Bishop Callon Holloway, Southern Ohio Synod, agreed that a united presence is a stronger presence. "The Lutherans in southern Ohio are in a sea of Methodists ... and we are swimming together well," he said. "There is work we could not do without our colleagues."

Steven Chapman, a layperson from the Northwest Washington Synod, wanted to know what United Methodists would bring to a potluck supper.

Minnesota United Methodist Bishop Sally Dyck stepped up to the microphone to reply. "I think we have the same recipe books," she quipped, drawing loud applause.

Lutheran delegates also approved the establishment of a joint commission to implement the agreement, including assisting joint planning for mission and developing worship materials to celebrate full communion.

Palmer referred to the vote when he preached at a communion service earlier in the day. "Please know of our love and our gratitude for the partnership we already share," he said.

He expressed admiration for the "singular grace" of Lutheran Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson, who preached at last year's United Methodist General Conference, and amusement over how similar the Lutheran assembly proceedings seemed to United Methodist legislative meetings.

"If I close my eyes - except for, say, the occasional references to Luther rather than Wesley - I've been here before," Palmer said. "Thanks for making me feel at home."

Palmer's sermon focused on Jesus washing the feet of his disciples during the Last Supper as a way of showing his love for them and the invitation that action holds for Christians to "bring alongside our creeds, our deeds."

Instead of "pining away" for the golden era when mainline denominations dominated society, Christians need to take hold of this call to action. Deeds must illuminate the words that Christians use to define their mission, the bishop said.

\* Linda Bloom is a United Methodist News Service news writer based in New York.

## Small churches offered low-cost Sunday school

*All-in-One Bible Fun: 13 Lessons for Busy Teachers* is a curriculum option for small churches with stretched budgets. The Sunday school program allows teachers to plan complete lessons without having to purchase additional components that larger children's ministries need.

Available for both preschool (<http://www.cokesbury.com/forms/ProductDetail.aspx?pid=817619>) and elementary (<http://www.cokesbury.com/forms/ProductDetail.aspx?pid=817620>) age children, the curriculum will be published in four books for each age group.

The first book, *Stories of Jesus*, was released in August. The remaining books, *Favorite Bible Stories*, *Heroes of the Bible*, and *Fruits of the Spirit* will be released over the rest of the year.

## DISCIPLE Outreach

continued from page 4

ing informed those within these Conferences of the model of prison ministry successfully being implemented by DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministries. Johnson wants to begin a new Disciple prison initiative in her Episcopal area. Leaders in these conferences are taking the first steps in making Johnson's dream a reality.

Recognizing that DISCIPLE Bible Studies cultivate lay people to become active leaders, Bishop John R. Schol of the Baltimore-Washington Conference invited Hicks to lead a DISCIPLE facilitator training event at the Conference headquarters.

Approximately 70 persons attended and can now begin training others interested in facilitating DISCIPLE Bible Studies. Schol hopes a DISCIPLE Prison Ministry initiative will follow.

\* Stephen Shytle is a Duke University intern serving at DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministries, Inc.

## Recovery month

continued from page 1

did not need it." (Results from the 2007 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings)

Addiction does not just affect the addict but affects all of those who love and care for the person in need of recovery.

The Church indeed has a responsibility to work in areas of recovery and in the NC Annual Conference, this is seen in ministries like Celebrate Recovery, a Christ-centered 12 step recovery ministry. Conference churches also welcome a variety of 12-step groups: Narcotics Anonymous, Alcohol Anonymous, Al-Anon, Alateen, to name a few.

To learn more ways churches can be in ministry to those who suffer from addiction, contact [www.umcgbcs.org](http://www.umcgbcs.org) or [www.recoverymonth.gov](http://www.recoverymonth.gov) for resources. Through Christ's transforming power, the Church can be the instrument of grace to bring release and recovery to all of those held captive.

\* The Rev. Trish Archer is the NC Conference contact for Alcoholism and Other Addictions Programs from the General Board of Church and Society. She serves as Deacon at Pine Valley-Wilmington and as Clinical Chaplain with Partners in Caring, a division of Duke Medicine's Pastoral Service Dept.

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## Seeking to eliminate poverty

The people of the NC Conference are invited to the "Poverty in Appalachia Mission Event." This is a holistic event exploring the faces of poverty and equipping participants to engage in lifestyles and solutions to eliminate poverty. The event is hosted by First Broad Street UMC, Kingsport, TN. The invitation is from Bishop James Swanson of the Holston Conference. The event will begin at noon on Friday, Sept. 11 and will conclude with a worship service at 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 12. Cost is \$18 per person if registered by Aug. 31, \$20 if registering after that date. (This will include Friday supper, Saturday breakfast and lunch.) For information about this event or to register, contact Danny Howe in the mission office at First Broad Street UMC, 423-224-1531 or by e-mail: [dhowe@fbsumc.org](mailto:dhowe@fbsumc.org). The website is [www.abolishingpoverty.org](http://www.abolishingpoverty.org).

## Legacy Building Sunday is Sept. 13

Sunday, Sept. 13 has been designated as Legacy Building Sunday, a day to celebrate the lives of local church members who have made endowment gifts or other legacy gifts for missions, ministry, and capital projects here in the North Carolina Annual Conference. It provides an excellent opportunity to talk about how persons can support ministry through wills and planned gifts. If your church has an elected Legacy Leader, it would be an excellent time for this person to speak to the congregation about leaving a legacy.

The NCC Legacy Partners stand ready to assist you in planning for this special day. The Legacy Partners website provides further information and a bulletin insert for Legacy Building Sunday <http://umlegacypartners.org/lbsunday.html>. If you need more information, or desire a guest speaker for that Sunday, contact Rev. Jim Mentzer at [jmentzer@nccumc.org](mailto:jmentzer@nccumc.org) or 919-836-0029.

## Training on managing conflict

A day of learning, Tuesday, Sept. 22 at Haymount UMC in Fayetteville will address the often avoided topic of conflict. Effective servant leaders see conflict not as an enemy but as a friend. The critical issue is how to handle conflict. In this experience clergy and lay leaders will develop insights and learn the skills needed to manage conflict more effectively. Russ Moxley, who designs and delivers leadership development workshops and consults with organizations, will lead the training. Registration is \$50. To register, call 919-208-2169 or e-mail [lwiebesmith@nccumc.org](mailto:lwiebesmith@nccumc.org). Registrations will be accepted until Sept. 17.

## Survey on economy's impact

The General Board of Discipleship is conducting a research survey to discover how the current global economic crisis is affecting practices of worship across the Church. In particular, how is the economic crisis affecting staffing, programming, and the purchase and use of resources? The findings of this survey will be published and used by the Center for Worship Resourcing in the coming year as they plan how best to serve churches in and through this difficult time. The survey may be found online at: [www.surveygizmo.com/s/164615/4gv6b](http://www.surveygizmo.com/s/164615/4gv6b)

## Day of Prayer for Peace is Sept. 21

Each year, as part of the International Day of Prayer for Peace, more individuals, groups, congregations and communities throughout the world are recognizing the significance of committing to One Day of Peace through prayer, meditation and other forms of spiritual observance. For more information and for resource materials, go to <http://www.idpvigil.com>.

## Christian educators' retreat

A CEF retreat based on the theme "Let's Explore: Father, Son and Holy Spirit" will be led by the Rev. F. Belton Joyner, Jr., Oct. 12-13 at Camp Agape near Fuquay-Varina. Registration deadline is Sept. 15. For a more information and a registration form, go to <http://nccumc.org/christian-education/>.

## Bishop's Day Apart

The Bishop's Day Apart for Reflection and Renewal, open to all clergy and diaconals, will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 15 at Nashville UMC, Nashville. The day will start with a gathering at 9:30 a.m. A boxed lunch will be served with a suggested donation of \$5 to help cover the cost of the meal. The program will begin promptly at 10 a.m. and finish by 3 p.m. An update on the Clergy Health Initiative will be included in the day's presentations.

## Convocation on the Black Church coming on Sept. 18-19

"Can These Dry Bones Live?" a Convocation on the Black Church will be held Sept. 18-19 at Hay Street UMC in Fayetteville. Sponsored by the conference Committee on Strengthening the Black Church, the event will include sessions about Risk-Taking Mission through Evangelism and Outreach and Revitalizing the Church. For more information and to access a registration form, go to <http://nccumc.org/multicultural/files/bc09.pdf>. Please note that the hotel recommendation for persons attending the "Can These Dry Bones Live?" Convocation has changed to the Red Roof Inn on Jim Johnson Rd, telephone 910-321-1460. Sponsored by the conference Committee on Strengthening the Black Church, the event will include sessions about Risk-Taking Mission through Evangelism and Outreach and Revitalizing the Church.

## EXPLORATION 2009 for young adults

Exploration 2009, scheduled for Nov. 13-15 in Dallas, TX, offers youth and young adults who feel God's call to ordained ministry as a deacon or elder in The United Methodist Church a chance to explore that call.

The event, sponsored by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, is open to high school seniors and young adults up to age 24.

The registration fee of \$150 includes a two-night stay at the Sheraton Dallas Hotel, meals, and program fees. To learn more, or register online now through Sept. 30, visit [www.gbhem.org/exploration](http://www.gbhem.org/exploration).

## CPI application deadline Sept. 30

Comprehensive Plan of Inclusiveness grant applications are due on Sept. 30 by 4 p.m. (if hand-delivered) or must be postmarked by Sept. 30. No faxed applications will be considered. The purpose of the grants is to strengthen programs/projects developed by one or more United Methodist church(es) with priority given to ethnic churches; to provide seed money to support mission projects addressing social concerns as they impact and empower racial/ethnic persons; and to provide programs for people to work together toward a better understanding of inclusiveness. Applications are available on the web at <http://nccumc.org/multicultural/comprehensive-plan-of-inclusiveness/>. New and innovative ministries will get strong consideration. For questions, call Dr. Lawrence E. Johnson, director of Multicultural and Social Ministries for the NC Conference at 1-800-849-4433 or email [ljohnson@nccumc.org](mailto:ljohnson@nccumc.org).

## Finding Jesus on Facebook

The Conference Safe Sanctuaries Committee is sponsoring a series of workshops for adults in ministry among children and youth entitled "Finding Jesus on Facebook." The workshop will address issues of cybersafety as well as ministry among the Internet generation. Participants will receive materials to use in their local churches. There is no cost to attend the workshop although anyone planning to attend should notify Robin Harry ([rharry@nccumc.org](mailto:rharry@nccumc.org)) about the attendance date and location. The workshop will be held on Saturday mornings from 10 a.m. to 12 noon as follows:

- + Oct. 17 at Jarvis Memorial UMC in Greenville;
- + Nov. 7 at Haymount UMC in Fayetteville;
- + Nov. 21 at Soapstone UMC in Raleigh.

More information about the workshop and how to register plans to attend can be found at [www.nccumc.org/children/safe-sanctuaries/](http://www.nccumc.org/children/safe-sanctuaries/).



# Forming the Inside Outside



## Mission Statement

NC UM Camp & Retreat Ministries, Inc., in the United Methodist tradition, invites children, youth and adults to **discover, reconnect and celebrate** God and God's creation through Jesus Christ.

There are Seven Foundations of Camp and Retreat Ministries through which we seek to serve God every day:

1. Providing Places Apart
2. Extending Christian Hospitality and Community
3. Nurturing Faith and Discipleship
4. Developing Christian Spiritual Leaders
5. Collaborating with United Methodist Churches & Agencies
6. Teaching Creation Care and Appreciation
7. Equipping Guests to Love and Do Justice



**Chestnut Ridge**

Camp and Retreat Center

[www.campchestnutridge.org](http://www.campchestnutridge.org)



[www.donleecenter.org](http://www.donleecenter.org)



[www.rockfishoutdoorcenter.org](http://www.rockfishoutdoorcenter.org)

## Chestnut Ridge celebrates 50th anniversary continued from page 1

Tours of The Community Farm were offered by Garden Manager Chris Burtner who walked guests through rows of fresh cucumbers, squash, watermelon, and tomatoes. Bishop Al Gwinn, Episcopal leader of the NC Conference, toured the farm and tasted some of the produce at the evening dinner.

The 50th Anniversary Celebration dinner was a gathering of special guests who were beckoned to dinner by bagpiper Kendall Hiles. Center Director, the Rev. Rhonda Parker welcomed everyone to the gathering and the Rev. Belton Joyner provided the invocation.

A proclamation was read by Michael Gering, mayor pro-tem of Hillsborough, and a DVD of Chestnut Ridge through the ages was presented (available for viewing at [www.campchestnutridge.org](http://www.campchestnutridge.org)).

The Union Grove UMC Chancel Choir provided music as the guests dined on foods raised at Chestnut Ridge along with fresh vegetables from The Community Farm.

Speakers during the dinner reminisced and reflected on the impact of Chestnut Ridge and camping ministries.

Speakers included Carol Goehring, executive director of Conference Connectional Ministries; Bill Gattis, Burlington District superintendent; Sharon Strother, camper parent; Gray Southern, Durham District superintendent; Marjorie Dodson, a member of Chestnut Ridge UMC; Bishop Al Gwinn; and Bobby Harris, executive director of NC UM Camp & Retreat Ministries.

*\* Dail D. Ballard is development director of NC UM Camp & Retreat Ministries.*



ABOVE: Vivian and John Mitchell speak with Dr. Belton Joyner at the celebration. The Mitchell's were involved with the camping ministry at Chestnut Ridge in the early days of its development. Joyner is on the board of directors for NC UM Camp & Retreat Ministries.

BELOW and LEFT: Hundreds of guests enjoyed the grounds of Chestnut Ridge whether by canoe or kayak, gathered around the picnic tables for conversation, touring the Community Farm, or enjoying the cotton candy and s'mores.







## Summer Camp 2009 - A record year at Chestnut Ridge

This year proved to be a record year for Chestnut Ridge's summer camp program. Registrations for residential camp increased by 28% this summer.

Program Director, the Rev. Nick Jeffries said, "In January, camps across the country were looking at the economy and wondering how it would affect summer camp registrations. The increase in registrations at Chestnut Ridge affirms the value of the summer camp ministry offered here."

He credits increased support from local United Methodist Churches as one of the reasons for the increase. Staff from Chestnut Ridge traveled throughout the spring to promote camp and retreat ministries in the NC Conference. At churches across the Conference, Chestnut Ridge held "Camp Sundays," attended potluck lunches, led youth group meetings, and filled pulpits.

Many churches increased their financial support of children and youth wishing to attend camp. Without that support, and the support of the Myra Morris Campership Endowment, many children would not have had the life-changing experience of attending summer camp.

Chestnut Ridge was also recently voted the "Best Overnight Camp," for the 2nd year in a row, by the readers of *Carolina Parent* magazine. The attention garnered from these accolades and the support of the Church have helped propel Chestnut Ridge to new heights, allowing the camp to touch the lives of more campers than ever before.

Summer 2009 saw 50 years of summer camp experience put into action, as well as some new and exciting activities added.

Fifty summer camp counselors from around the world served at Chestnut Ridge with one goal in

mind: to create a caring environment in the natural world where campers can experience the love of God.

Ready with water bottles and sunscreen, the campers rode horses, swam in the pool, rode the zipline, visited the animals at The Community Farm, and canoed around the lake.

The addition of new inflatable lake toys was a huge hit. Campers sang and laughed as they traveled with their counselors to all the different activities. Through worship and small group times, campers learned what it means to live in community, and what it means to love God and to love your neighbor.

"As I walked around the lake the other day I came across a young boy sitting on the dock watching all the other kids play on the inflatable lake toys," Jeffries said.

"I asked him why he wasn't playing with everyone, and he said he was scared because he couldn't swim. I assured him that the lifejacket would keep him afloat, but that didn't really help. I called counselor Ray over to help me out."

"After talking with the camper, Ray helped that camper off the dock and into the water. They swam, hand-in-hand, over to the Summit, a large inflatable slide. Ray helped the boy climb the Summit, and they slid down the other side together. The wide smile that spread across the camper's face was priceless. That is what camp is all about. Trying new things, building self-esteem, sharing God's unconditional love with all."

The campers at Chestnut Ridge were blessed to have counselors and staff who put the camper's needs ahead of their own, dedicated their time and talent to creating the best possible camp experience, and shared God's love.

## Volunteers are valued partners

Thoughts from Daryl Riggins\*

Having had the good fortune to spend the past seven years at Chestnut Ridge, it is an understatement to say that I have seen changes. Floors have been replaced, roofs have been rebuilt, and grass has been mowed. None of this would have been possible without the generous involvement of Chestnut Ridge volunteers.

The proverbial camp "to-do list" has been passed like a baton through the years since Chestnut Ridge was born. It has a half-life not unlike Plutonium. This camp was built with the hands, feet, sweat and money of many, many dedicated men and women. Only a few weeks ago, we hosted fifteen youth from a local church who spent two sweaty days moving branches and beautifying an acre of forest. I remain amazed and humbled at the willingness of persons to choose to bless us with their labor when relaxing on the couch is an option.

Looking forward, we have ambitious goals to not only improve, but expand the capacity of this place to minister to future generations. Ranging from pulling weeds to building a 200-person meeting space, the work speaks to each of us. Whether you have minimal skill or a lifetime of expertise, our common bond is a passion for sharing Christ's love and a dedication to seeing Chestnut Ridge thrive. I encourage you to get involved with us in the capacity that's right for you. Contact [daryl@campchestnutridge.org](mailto:daryl@campchestnutridge.org) for more information.

\* Daryl Riggins is site & facilities director at Chestnut Ridge.

### Year-Long Opportunities

While every day can't be summer camp, Chestnut Ridge offers opportunities for campers to have great adventures and enjoy the camp community all year long. These are examples of the camps planned for the coming year (see [www.campchestnutridge.org](http://www.campchestnutridge.org) for more information):

#### Waterdog Weekends:

Weekend camps for 3rd - 5th graders

Sept. 11-13

Oct. 9-11

#### Duskie Weekends:

Adventure trips for 6th - 8th graders

Sept. 11-13 - Sea Kayaking

Oct. 9 - 11 - Rock Climbing

Nov. 13-15 - Caving

Jan. 8-10 - Big Freeze camping trip

Feb. 26-28 - Mountain Biking

March 28 - April 1 - Spring Break

backpacking on the Appalachian Trail

April 23-25 - White Water Rafting

May 21-23 - Canoe the New River

## Retreats — a time of renewal

When the hustle and bustle of summer camp ends, the retreat season at Chestnut Ridge gets underway. With 362 acres of God's creation to enjoy, Chestnut Ridge offers a beautiful setting for retreats.

Amid the changing leaves of the Chestnut Oak trees, retreats provide a break from the busy activities everyone faces to a time of renewal in our relationship with God.

Retreatants share worship at the lake chapel, enjoy walks in the woods, and roast smores around the campfire. Through sharing a meal, worshipping with one another, and even sharing a cabin with one another, a

retreat strengthens the community that is the body of Christ.

Chestnut Ridge is not very far, but as a visitor enters the gates, the feeling of being in another world is present. It is a world where folks take time to enjoy simple pleasures like canoeing on the lake or riding a horse through the woods. Come and retreat.





## Food & Faith: the Community Farm at Chestnut Ridge

Thoughts from Chris Burtner \*

Do you know where the food you ate today was grown? Do you know who grew it? Chestnut Ridge Camp and Retreat Center can often answer "yes" to these questions because a portion of the food served at camp is grown and raised right on the property by campers and staff. The Community Farm at Chestnut Ridge began three years ago with a vision of connecting the camp community with God and each other through the food that is eaten. A community garden grows on The Farm, surrounded by pastures for grazing livestock. Campers, visitors, retreat participants, and the local community are welcome to join camp staff in the growing and sharing of food.

In the community garden, a wide variety of fruits and vegetables are raised using organic and sustainable methods. Campers are invited to the garden to help with planting seeds, tending the soil, and harvesting the crops. They can't wait to see "their" seeds grow and to taste what is produced. The community garden is also the perfect place to bring scripture to life! The children get hands-on experience with the sun, soil, water, and air that God created. They learn about God's daily provision for our needs and experience God's presence in the beauty of the garden. Campers and staff work together to grow good food and learn the value of community and team work.

In addition to helping in the garden, campers and others have the opportunity to tend the livestock at The Community Farm. Pigs, goats, chickens, and cows call The Community Farm home. Children can experience moving a "chicken tractor", gathering eggs, milking a goat, feeding cattle and pigs. Caring for these animals helps us to live into the call to be good stewards of Creation... and it is fun! Retreat participants and members of the local community also contribute to the care of our livestock at The Community Farm by helping with activities like fence building,

mowing, and pasture maintenance. At the Community Farm at Chestnut Ridge, people, animals, and plants come together to the benefit of all.

\* Chris Burtner is The Community Farm Manager at Chestnut Ridge.

### Garden Fresh Salsa

3 large ripe tomatoes,  
finely chopped  
1 medium onion, finely diced  
1 jalapeno or green pepper,  
seeded and finely chopped  
1 tomatillo, husked  
and finely chopped  
1 clove fresh garlic, minced  
1 tablespoon lime juice  
3 tablespoons chopped  
fresh cilantro  
1 teaspoon sea salt  
½ teaspoon black pepper

Combine all ingredients in a non-metal bowl. Refrigerate for 30 minutes. Serve with tortilla or pita chips. Enjoy!

### Yellow Squash Divine

4 yellow squash,  
sliced in rounds  
1/3 cup olive oil  
1 teaspoon salt  
2 teaspoons garlic powder  
1 tablespoon flour  
8 oz. feta cheese, crumbled  
2 tablespoons  
chopped fresh dill

Steam squash for 3-5 minutes in a microwave or steamer. Place in a baking dish. Drizzle with oil. Sprinkle with salt, garlic powder, flour. In a bowl, blend feta cheese and dill. Spread mixture over squash. Bake at 350 for 10 minutes until cheese is melted and lightly browned and squash is heated through.



## Horseback riding programs thrive at Chestnut Ridge

Summer Riding Camp was a success this year as demonstrated by the smiling faces and the wait list to be in horse camp.

As much as the horses would love to return to the wild for the next nine months, they have kids and adults looking forward to learning on and about them throughout the year.

The Chestnut Ridge riding program has four areas of focus.

**Summer Riding Camp** offers children in grades Kindergarten through High School the opportunity to learn about and ride horses as a beginner or improve upon skills. Campers are taught by experienced instructors who desire to share their appreciation of horses, their love of God and His creation, and their joy in working with youth. This summer, High School campers went on the camp's first off-site camping and riding trip to Uwharrie National Forest. Registration for horse camp opens Dec. 1.

**Group Lessons** run September through May after school and on Saturdays for youth and adults. A special riding class is offered on Saturdays for families who want to have a shared horse experience. Also offered this year is a competitive riding class where riders are invited to tryout and join in local riding competitions. Information for riding lessons can be found on the camp website under trailriding.

**Group Trail Rides** are open to anyone over the age of 8. Ride Western style through beautiful trails on friendly horses with wonderful staff. To sign up call the camp office.

**Horse Husbandry** classes are available for scout groups wanting to earn badges, for school groups and church or secular groups. Classes are tailored in content, length and fees according to the group's needs. For questions, call the camp or email joanna@campchestnutridge.org.



## EcoEternity Forest – A green resting place

At 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 11, Chestnut Ridge will consecrate one acre of land alongside Lake Fellowship as an EcoEternity Forest an alternative green burial concept where memorial trees are chosen as final resting places for the cremated ashes of individuals, families, or friends.

In the last decade, the culture of interment has changed in America. Cremation has gained popularity, and people are increasingly selecting natural, green burial settings for their final resting place. Day to day life has become hectic and fast paced.

For many, a natural environment provides peace, freedom, and continuity. In addition to providing a natural resting place, EcoEternity Forests provide family and friends

with the opportunity to share a resting place beneath the same tree, effectively restoring the concept of a family burial plot which is difficult in a more urbanized, geographically dispersed culture.

Located in Orange County, the EcoEternity Forest at Chestnut Ridge is in the heart of North Carolina. The forest overlooks Lake Fellowship. The forest at Chestnut Ridge provides both the gift of community and also the quiet sounds of nature and restful solitude.

In the forests, visitors will find a variety of indigenous trees including White Oak, Shagbark Hickory, Birch, Maple, and Tulip Poplar.

Chestnut Ridge's mission is to make the love of Christ visible through the practices of hospitality,

responsible care for the earth, and meaningful fellowship that strengthens the community.

Center Director Rhonda Parker says, "The EcoEternity Forest is an expression of commitment to this mission on every level."

"The addition of an EcoEternity Forest at Chestnut Ridge completes our mission to make the love of Christ visible to the world from the cradle to the grave. This forest demonstrates faithful stewardship of creation through our lives and in our deaths. It embodies the hope that we proclaim in Christ Jesus: even though we die, yet shall we live," said Parker.

All are welcome to attend the consecration service and reception on Oct. 11 at 2:30 p.m. Casual, comfortable outdoor attire is appropriate.



## Don Lee - A place of refuge, spiritual exploration, healing, growth

This June marked the beginning of Thomas Bryant's ninth summer at Don Lee Camp & Retreat Center. He started his camp career as an advanced sailor and worked his way up through the natural progression transitioning through Tweakers, Mariners, the LIT program, and eventually a position as a Sailing Staff member.

What is it that keeps bringing him back, year after year? This question has perplexed Bryant's friends over the years. What could possibly make it worth spending an entire summer away from home earning a meager pay check and working constantly?

As with most things in life, appreciation for things tends to be derived over time. The older one gets the more one comes to understand the significance of things, comprehending the decisions made and the motivations behind them. Just as most things begin with an appearance of monotony and insignificance when someone is young, graduating into a gradual realization of importance, camp too has followed this recurring form.

This fall, as Bryant starts his sophomore year at UNC- Chapel Hill, the clarity has continued to grow for him. Camp is a refuge.

There are not too many places in society that function as an escape from the distractions and false realities of everyday life. It is far too easy now days to get so wrapped up

within popular culture that one fails to set aside enough time for those things that truly matter. A place that allows anyone to take a step back and reevaluate, approaching things with a fresh perspective, is something to be cherished – and Don Lee provides that place.

"College is the perfect place to lose yourself in the moment and not emerge," says Bryant. This past year he found himself taken with the college culture. He immersed himself in college life. Yet, upon the prompting of a fellow Don Lee staff member, Bryant decided to work a retreat at camp.

"That night," he said, "I looked up at the stars. How long had it been since I took a moment to gaze in awe at the night sky? Of all my late nights at school I could not remember the last time I let myself be absorbed by the magnificence of this complex universe in which we live. That night I remembered why I need camp so much."

Camp has always been a place of



spiritual exploration, healing, and growth. This became more evident to Bryant in a conversation that developed with campers on a trip to Cape Lookout this summer.

What started out as a simple exchange of personal information between the group quickly gave way to deep questions of religion, theology, and life. Bryant did his best to explain concepts of faith, ranging from the trinity to the translation of belief into action.

Bryant recalls similar conversations when he was a camper, prodding staff members with questions. "Camp has had a profound impact on my life," Bryant proclaims.

Such reflections only serve to

strengthen his belief that questioning is the foundation of faith. Campers and Staff often come questioning some element of belief, then look for the answer; and when they find an answer it only leads to more questions, and the cycle continues. It is this that fuels clarity in understanding and the formation and growth of a relationship with the Creator.

"Camp is the place that has served to incubate the relationship that I have with God," says Bryant. "I cannot even fathom my life if you were to remove it from the equation. It is this spot in my life that Camp Don Lee has come to occupy; I only hope that I can give back even a fraction of what I have received."

## Rockfish - Experiencing God's love in a natural setting like no other

Camp Rockfish had a successful summer with over 900 children attending Resident Camp and a little over 300 served in the Day Camp ministry.

Each day was set apart by teaching, learning and experiencing God's love in a natural setting like no other.

One parent of a returning camper was so pleased with her camper's experience she wrote:

"I just picked up my daughter, Brittany, from her second week of camp this summer. She had so much fun and told me for the second time that this year was so much better than

last year...which is amazing, because she loved it last year. The changes Brittany particularly liked were the addition of the animals, the devotions done with the counselors, and of course the food."

Summer days at Rockfish included swimming in the pool, playing on the inflatable lake toys, getting dirty on the mud walk, practicing archery, canoeing or kayaking, learning about the environment, climbing the high ropes or soaring tower, and sliding down the 350 foot zip line.

Under the leadership of new Camp Director, David Weber, Rockfish staff are now focusing on expansion of the youth and adult retreat programs for the year-round experience.

Weber comes to Rockfish from Don Lee Camp & Retreat Center where he held the position of Retreat Coordina-

tor. Weber moved to Rockfish with his wife, Jennifer and three children in March.

Along with his many skills, he brings a desire to make Camp Rockfish a necessity on the retreat calendars of youth and adult groups throughout the region and beyond.

Future plans include developing an extensive environmental education program that can be enjoyed by school groups for day and overnight trips and by youth groups as part of weekend retreats.

Planning retreat activities for adult groups is also in the works with the Bergland Retreat Center available with motel style accommodations.

Remodeling and refurbishing several of the camp's facilities are now underway.

The architectural integrity of the "Lodge" is being restored and the "Camp Store" has undergone extensive remodeling since April.

Campers, guests, and staff are enjoying the beauty of the Lodge

and the luxury of shopping in a "real" camp store atmosphere.

Summer camp, 2009 at Rockfish was one filled with laughter, fun, and God's love. With Weber's new leadership there will surely be many more of the same.

For more information, visit [www.rockfishoutdoorcenter.org](http://www.rockfishoutdoorcenter.org).





# Duke Clergy Health Initiative study *continued from page 4*

that level of supervision.

"We're not diligent about the person who's not taking care of themselves," one district superintendent noted. "I mean, we ask the question, 'What are you doing to take care of yourself?' And we may say, 'Well, you need to do more. You need to do a better job in taking care of yourself.' But I don't know that we really hold people accountable, that we follow through, that we somehow relay to them that we truly value and think it's important for them to be healthy and whole."

Said another: "I was having a conversation with a pastor, and he had not had any vacation in an extended amount of time. Before we left, I felt led to say to him, 'I'm going to call you on June 1 and I'm going to ask you when you have scheduled your vacation. And when I call you on June 1, I expect you to say I have hotel arrangements in such-and-such a town for so many days.' And he was shocked to hear me say it, but he was pleased."

Pastors also noted that district superintendents can be helpful to pastors who are facing challenging church dynamics. "Before I went to my previous pastoral appointment, because of some of the dynamics that I knew I was going to face, it was recommended to me by a district superintendent that I might want to go into some preventative counseling just so as things arose I knew how to handle them," a pastor said. "I'd have someone to talk through things. And I found that to be helpful."

Pastors reported looking to district superintendents, as conveyers of the United Methodist institution, for cues about how many hours they should work.

"There has to be a change in the culture -- and I don't know how to do that -- but the culture of, 'It's OK to give and give and give,'" a pastor said. "In fact, you're rewarded for being a workaholic, and there are incentives within the system not to set boundaries and not to take time off to go to the gym or other things."

## Supervisors set the tone

Pastors also talked about the United Methodist Church's leadership structure, in which bishops oversee district superintendents who, in turn, supervise pastors. Those district superintendents, pastors said, can support their health by asking about their self-care and encouraging the practice of setting aside personal time. By their own description, though, district superintendents don't universally practice that level of supervision.

"We're not diligent about the

person who's not taking care of themselves," one district superintendent noted. "I mean, we ask the question, 'What are you doing to take care of yourself?' And we may say, 'Well, you need to do more. You need to do a better job in taking care of yourself.' But I don't know that we really hold people accountable, that we follow through, that we somehow relay to them that we truly value and think it's important for them to be healthy and whole."

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## The stress of transitions

A distinctive aspect of the United Methodist Church is its itinerant system, in which bishops and district superintendents assign pastors to churches and change those assignments periodically.

In North Carolina, for instance, each year about 25 percent of United Methodist pastors change assignments.

Pastors acknowledged that their calling positions them as servants in the United Methodist Church, and they accept itinerancy as their choice.

At the same time, though, pastors

said the transition between church appointments affects their health in several ways, including disrupting regular sources of medical care, exercise routines and gym memberships.

They are also forced to re-establish their authority as pastor and work through the toll the changes take on their families. Pastors reported that leaving behind a church and the corresponding friendships is "kind of like grief." One district superintendent suggested that the lack of a formal grieving process, including the expectation that pastors leave one church and join another within a week, is unhealthy for pastors.

"Explore the moving process," one district superintendent said. "Everything we know about grief, stress, loss, we throw out the window -- no time to disengage, no time to engage. We expect everybody to have cried their tears by 12 p.m. and be ready for Sunday service. That alone would open up ways to cultivate better health practices."

Itinerancy exacerbates the financial strains many pastors face. At the lower end of the salary scale -- around \$34,000 -- resources such as healthy food and exercise facilities may be unaffordable, especially for pastors raising families. They also may be out of reach during a time of transition, when expenses are high and often another family member has to find a new job.

"I had a membership to the Y and then my financial situation became really strained, and I had to cut out some things and that was the thing to go," one pastor said.

Said another: "Often [those] who need the rest the most can't afford -- not jobwise but just financially -- to go to the retreat center, which can be a very healing, restoring thing."

## Holistic model of health

Taken together, these findings suggest that health programs tailored to clergy should go beyond encouraging pastors to exercise and eat well.

Congregations might support their pastors' health, for example, by protecting a certain amount of personal time for pastors.

Programs can also be developed to improve the functioning of congregations and create procedures to handle conflict so that pastors and congregants alike experience less stress.

Health programming for clergy should also integrate physical, mental and spiritual health components.

In the United Methodist Church system, district superintendents can support pastors' health directly through encouraging pastors to take vacations and protect personal time, and indirectly through helping

congregations understand pastors' roles and needs. The amount of time between changing church appointments could also be lengthened.

This picture of clergy health counters a popular belief that because clergy are disciplined in their spiritual practices they must also be disciplined in their personal practices. To the contrary, people working closely with clergy have been concerned about clergy physical and mental health practices. This research helps elucidate the pressures and beliefs of clergy, thereby paving the way for clergy, congregations and institutions to work together to create a healthy future for clergy.

## Questions to consider:

How does your theology inform your health practices? What does it mean to you to embody Christ?

Have particular aspects of your denomination's polity affected your health? Have institutional factors contributed to your well-being, or undermined it? Who has been particularly supportive of you during your ministry?

How might we engage congregations around health issues, from the foods we serve at church functions to the ways we advocate for health in our communities?

How could the topic of "clergy health" be broadened into a conversation about laity and clergy roles in the shared ministry of the congregation?

*\* Rae Jean Proeschold-Bell, Ph.D., is the research director of the Duke Clergy Health Initiative and Assistant Research Professor in the Duke Global Health Institute and the Duke University Center for Health Policy. Trained in both clinical and community psychology, she is interested in the impact of systems on individuals, and also in the environmental contexts experienced by individuals.*

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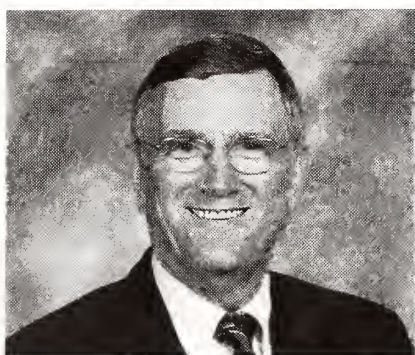
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*An Alternative Way To Travel With Someone You Can Trust*





By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

**October 4, 2009**

**Text: Mark 1:35-45**  
**"Looking for Jesus"**

This Sunday's lesson is about Jesus' welcome of a man who was considered an outcast. Whatever the man's spiritual and physical disease, it kept him away from his family and his worshiping community.

When Jesus gave the gift of healing, it was far more than that; it was a restoration to relationships (Mark 1:44). The man went from unclean to clean, both in body and in religious community.

In many congregations, this Sunday is observed as World Communion Sunday.

Our Lord is still in the welcoming business, the healing business, the restoration business. But the question emerges: Who does not feel invited to the Lord's Table?

Is it someone who thinks she does not measure up to the financial or social standards of the congregation? Is it someone who feels he has made too many mistakes in life? Is it someone who finds church language a foreign language? Is it someone who is too defined by the passions of anger? Is it someone who has been led to wonder if God messed up in the way God created her?

Of course, if persons feel welcomed at our Lord's Table there is no telling who might come! Look at Mark 1:45:

once the word got out that Jesus is willing to touch even those declared unclean (unfit), people came to him from everywhere.

Jesus had to walk a tightrope between proclaiming (Mark 1:38) and keeping quiet (Mark 1:43). He had a message to preach: the kingdom of God is around you; repent and enjoy it (Mark 1:15)!

But he also had a concern that persons might misunderstand the full nature of his Messiahship (Mark 1:43).

I wonder how Jesus thought the man he healed could ever keep quiet about it. Imagine the scene at the family home: here is one who has been cut off from the family who now shows up for supper! Imagine the scene at the temple: here is one who has been denied access to the faith community who now shows up for a blessing! So it is not surprising that the word "leaked out"!

Here is something to ponder: in Mark 1:38 where Jesus says he must "proclaim the message" and in Mark 1:45 where the man "proclaims it freely."

In both cases, the word for proclaim (*kērussō*) is the same. Perhaps our witness, our testimony, our invitation is a way of joining Jesus in his ministry.

#### **What Someone Else Has Said:**

Thaddeus Barnum (*Never Silent*, Eleison Publishing) describes his understanding of ministry: "Now it is our turn. No amount of anger and bitterness, no amount of personal suffering can ever shut our mouths... We go to the mission field. We go

to the lost and suffering and we tell them about Jesus."

#### **Prayer:**

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Lord Jesus, we come..."

**October 11, 2009**

**Text: Mark 5:1-20**  
**"Recognizing Jesus"**

Have you ever had a spiritual mountain-top experience?

Perhaps it was a service of worship when the hymns seemed powerful and uplifting. Perhaps it was a spiritual retreat when you were warmed by the focus on our Lord.

Perhaps it was a Bible study when suddenly a text reached out and claimed you. Perhaps it was a youth event when you felt a call from God on your life.

Perhaps it was a simple time in the privacy of your prayer.

In this week's study text, the man with the unclean spirit has a spiritual mountain-top experience with Jesus (Mark 1:13). Can you blame the man for wanting to stay close to the Master, to follow with Jesus (Mark 1:18)?

About a hundred years ago when I was a college student still active in conference youth ministry, I was part of summer weeks at Louisburg College. ("Louisburg Assembly" was like what North Carolina Conference youth ministry today calls "Break-away.")

One week there was a high school student who for the very first time found his life's meaning in Jesus

Christ. It was an emotionally stirring experience. He said, "For the first time in my life, my tears are tears of joy." His journey had been a hard one, but now he faced life with new purpose and hope. And he went back home.

The next week, his pastor brought him back to Louisburg. "Carson wants to stay on the mountain-top," the pastor said to me. "Can you help him understand that all of the Christian life is not an emotional high?"

The three of us talked under one of those beautiful trees on the Louisburg campus. I said what I hoped were the right things. But when I asked about Carson later, I learned that he had stopped going to church and had decided that there really was not anything to this Christian walk.

Mountain-top views can be dangerous, if we decide that we are meant to live there. Maybe it is good to remember that the air can get rather thin on top of the mountain!

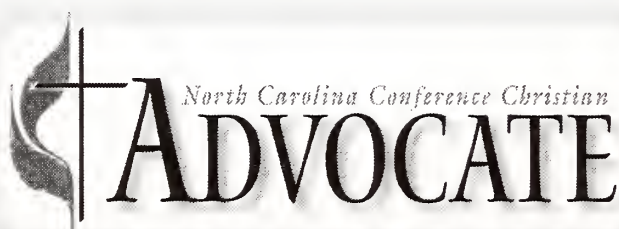
In this text, Jesus sends the man back home (Mark 1:19). Of course, most of us want a life and ministry that is filled with excitement and highlights, but sometimes Jesus simply wants us to go back home.

So, if we have never had a dramatic encounter with Jesus or even if we have—we need to be open to the One who says that our ministry is in the routines of friendship, of home, of daily life (Mark 1:19).

#### **What Some Else Has Said:**

In Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics*, Volume IV, Part 1 (T & T Clark),

See "Bible study," page 13



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# October adult Bible study *continued from page 12*

the German theologian wrote, "For because it is faith in Jesus Christ, it can be true and living faith only as the humility of obedience."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Send me, if it's Your will..."

## October 18, 2009

**Text: Mark 7:24-30**

### "Begging to Get In"

When Matthew tells this week's story of "the Syrophenician woman," he remembers that the disciples wanted Jesus to tell the woman to buzz off "for she keeps shouting after us" (Matthew 15:23). Sometimes, it seems, it is Jesus' friends who cause him the most trouble! (Hello, Church!)

The account hinges on the fact that the woman was a Gentile (Mark 7:26).

She is hurting because her daughter is hurting (Mark 7:25). Sometimes, we forget that those we think of as "different" most often share the same feelings we do: disappointment, envy, joy, pain, love.

Rich people seem "different" to most of us, but people with wealth also bear the range of human emotions and hurts.

Homosexual persons seem "different" from the heterosexual majority, but gay and lesbian persons also have the happiness and sadness and doubt and trust that come to all persons.

Those of other faiths seem "different" from Christians, but others also come packaged with demons and with delights—just as Christians do.

So, here is this story in Mark reminding us that many of the boundaries we create between one another are artificial constructs; this Gentile woman knows the same love of daughter, the same search for relief, and the same openness to good news as does the Jewish community that gathers around Jesus.

Jesus knows something of the power of contrast. His message of healing and caring is made all the more clear because he contrasts the popular opinion that he came only for the Jews ("king of the Jews") with the reality that his grace and love is offered to all. It is when the woman recognizes that Jesus is to feed all (Mark 7:28) that our Lord announces that the daughter is healed (Mark 7:29).

Don't let it slip by that the daughter was healed, but was still lying in bed when the mother got home (Mark

7:30). The daughter had become so accustomed to the burden of the demon that she did not know how to go on in life once she was freed.

Jesus Christ frees us from sin and from death, but we still act as unforgiven people and as those who still fear the grave. But, folks, the demon is gone! Act like it!

## What Someone Else Has Said:

Alice Knotts (*Fellowship of Love*, Kingswood) quotes a 1950 issue of *The Methodist Woman*, in which Thelma Stevens (and others) wrote "Peace will come only when Christian men, women, and children...work hard enough and sacrifice enough to uproot fear from the hearts of (humankind) everywhere! It will come when neighbors are friends without fear of artificial barriers...!"

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Change me, Lord..."

## October 25, 2009

**Text: Mark 10:17-31**

### "Opting Out!"

This lesson unloads a ton of questions. Why did Jesus say God alone was good (Mark 10:18)? Was it a way of saying that he understood his own divinity?

What had been going on in the man's life that now he was concerned about eternal life (Mark 10:17)? Why did the man think of eternal life as an inheritance rather than something earned (Mark 10:17)?

Why did Jesus pick out just some of the commandments (Mark 10:19)? Was the man lying through his teeth when he said he had kept these commandments ever since he was young (Mark 10:20)?

Why does Mark make a point of saying that Jesus' hard words to the man were made in the context of loving the man (Mark 10:21)?

More questions: Was Jesus' instruction to this man intended for this man's situation or is it aimed at all of us (Mark 10:21)?

What is the connection between treasures in heaven and giving to the

poor (Mark 10:21)?

Did the man ever come back and change his mind (Mark 10:22)? What does this passage teach us about free will (Mark 10:22)? Why would the man have been shocked (Mark 10:22)?

More questions: Why did the disciples have such a hard time understanding what Jesus was teaching (Mark 10:23-24)? Does God love poor people more than rich people (Mark 10:23)?

Why is it hard to enter the kingdom if God really wants us in the kingdom (Mark 10:24)? Why does Jesus call the disciples "children" (Mark 10:24)? Was Jesus telling a joke about the camel or is that one of those "you had to be there" stories (Mark 10:25)?

Why did the disciples take what Jesus said about the rich and extend the question to include all persons (Mark 10:26)?

Why would Jesus advise the man to sell his goods if salvation is impossible for mortals, no matter what they do (Mark 10:27)?

More questions: When Peter says the disciples have left all in order

to follow Jesus, why, if salvation is impossible for mortals to accomplish, does Jesus suggest that this will earn them one hundred fold now and eternal life in the future (Mark 10:28-30)?

Why does Jesus "sneak in" the reference to persecutions in the midst of all the rewards (Mark 10:30)? What does Jesus mean by the mysterious announcements that kingdom order is not the same as worldly order (Mark 10:31)?

Okay. I've come up with the questions. You come up with the answers.

## What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Confessing the Gospel* (Board of Education, The Methodist Church), Edmund Perry quotes how John Calvin paraphrased what Jesus said to the rich man: "Thou falsely callest me Good Master unless thou acknowledgest that I come from God."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Good Teacher, what..."

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# UMM seeks to bring young men into active church lives

By Linda Green\*

United Methodist Men (UMM) wants to change the perception that its members are ROMEOS, or "Retired Old Men who Eat Out."

The men admit to enjoying their pancake breakfasts, their fish fries and lunch and dinner meetings at restaurants or in fellowship halls.

But United Methodist Men also spent \$15 million in missions projects at local churches last year.

They are working hard to address one of the denomination's major needs: recruiting young men to active church lives. Reaching out to new generations was a focus of their national gathering in Nashville.

Michael Stewart, 24, a member of West Grove UMC, Avondale, Pa., attended the conference for insight on how to start a men's group in his area. "There is a lack of men in just about every aspect of church life,"

Stewart said. "We need help. We need everybody."

## Where have all the young men gone?

The number one crisis in the American Protestant church today is a lack of men in the church and a lack of men growing spiritually, said the Rev. David Adams, top executive of United Methodist Men.

In the United States, there are 69 million men who do not know Christ, and the lack of men in worship and in men's ministry groups is a dilemma affecting churches of all races and economic strata, he said.

For aging denominations such as The United Methodist Church, keeping and recruiting young men is a particular concern. The average age of men in the Church is unknown, but officials believe it is older than 57, the average age of a United Methodist.

A major issue facing men's ministry, officials say, are gender stereotypes suggesting either that church work is "women's work" or the role of men is to learn just to get along and do whatever tasks they are assigned.

Sunday worship services in many churches are filled primarily with women and men's ministry officials want to overcome the stigma that the church has become "demasculinized."

The Rev. Jacques Banks believes older men must demonstrate to younger men "that being a man of God does not make one weak or prohibit a person from doing what they enjoy" as a way to make young men come to UMM. The point is not to compete with or replace women, according to Adams. "It is about how men can stand side by side with women to partner with the pastor to increase the Kingdom of God."

Statistics from the Commission on UMM indicate that when a man accepts Christ first in the family, the family follows him to church 93 percent of the time.

"What this reveals is that if the church had an increase of men, there would also be more women and children," Adams said. "It's a win-win for God and the church."

## Start with evangelism

The first step to bringing in more young men is reaching out, many observers said. If UMM is thought of in terms of evangelism rather than as a dining out club, the organization and the church can grow.

Bringing men into the church requires a "face-to-face explanation of what Christ has done in our lives and what Christ will do in their lives," said Earle Harvey, a member of Peoples UMC, South Portland, Maine.

Dwayne Hyman, 20, said men his age are not in church because of the myriad distractions keeping them from coming to know God. But, he said, learning to be "a real man" in the church is part of his journey of self-discovery.

Justin Perez, 17, of Norristown, Penn, is a member of UMM because

it helps him further his faith and enhance his relationship with God. He recommended that churches offer more sports activities for youth and talk about God during those activities. "Young men are not in church because it does not appeal," he said.

Steven White, 16, agrees the church needs more activities that are relevant to young men. "It would make us more active and want to come and learn more about Jesus," said White.

A recent study on the younger unchurched and the churches that reach them points out that young adults need cross-generational relationships. Mature adults can challenge their younger counterparts to move on to maturity through friendship, wisdom, and support, the study said.

## Part of something bigger

According to the Lewis Center for Church Leadership, the study concluded that young adults want to be a part of something bigger than themselves and are looking to be a part of a place where they can make a difference through acts of service.

Ellsworth McCampbell, a member of Bethel UMC, Flint, Mich., said church members and men should move beyond their comfort zones, canvass their communities and invite young men in.

"Young men are not going to come in by themselves," McCampbell said. "If we as men care enough and love enough for what we represent, then we can get the job done."

\* Linda Green is a UM News Service news writer based in Nashville, Tenn.

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## conference CALENDAR

### September

- 12 Conference UMW Executive Committee, 9:30am, Millbrook UMC, Raleigh
- 13 Legacy Building Sunday
- 15 Bishops Day Apart ; Nashville UMC, 9:30am-3pm
- 18-19 Convocation on the Black Church, Hay Street UMC, Fayetteville
- 18-20 Mother Child Retreat, Camp Don Lee
- 22 Academy for Leadership Excellence Days of Learning, Haymount UMC, Fayetteville

### October

- 1 Advocate Advisory Board., 2pm., UM Building, Raleigh
- 3 Board of Laity., 9:30am, UM Building, Raleigh
- 10 Conference UMW Annual Meeting, Methodist University, Fayetteville
- 12-13 Christian Educators Fellowship (CEF) Retreat; Camp Agape, Fuquay-Varina, NC
- 15-17 Academy of Christian Witness for Laity, Camp Rockfish

NC Conference events are online at [www.nccumc.org/calendar](http://www.nccumc.org/calendar)



## World Council of Churches hosts young adult internship program in Geneva; applications for 2010-11 are due by Sept. 30

The World Council of Churches welcomes five young people (aged 18-30 years) to serve as interns in its Geneva offices.

Applications for the internships must be received by the WCC by Sept. 30, 2009 via mail, fax, or email.

The interns will serve at the World Council offices in Geneva, Switzerland from February 2010 to January 2011.

The council is looking for interns who are committed to the ideals of the ecumenical movement, to bring their energy, commitment and fresh vision to a specific work assignment.

For the WCC, interns represent the potential of the ecumenical movement, and its search for a renewed vocation.

Interns bring valuable experiences to the WCC at the same time as they go through several modules of ecumenical learning.

The WCC Internships Programme prepares young people to continue their ecumenical involvement beyond the internship.

Interns work in a WCC programme for a one-year period. During this time, they gain work experience in an ecumenical field and are then

given the tools to take this back to the local level.

The second emphasis of the internship programme is on ecumenical formation and community-building: as a group, the interns learn how to work in a multicultural and multiconfessional environment.

Each intern also develops an ecumenical project to be implemented back in their home contexts.

By providing young people with a rich international experience of community-building, team work and ecumenical learning, this activity strengthens both local churches

and the ecumenical movement as a whole.

The WCC is a worldwide fellowship of 349 churches seeking unity, a common witness and Christian service.

For more information and application forms, visit <http://www.oikoumene.org/?ID=3187>.

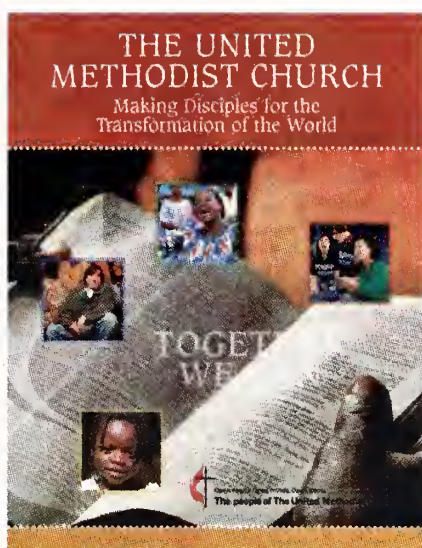
## Updated handbook details mission, beliefs, structure

United Methodist Communications announces the publication of the 2009-12 edition of The United Methodist handbook, a 48-page, colorful publication filled with comprehensive information about The United Methodist Church and the ways it lives out its global mission.

Titled *The United Methodist Church: Making Disciples for the Transformation of the World*, the handbook is available at no charge.

"This handbook is an invaluable resource for church leaders, members, and those who are new to the church," said the Rev. Larry Hollon, chief executive of United Methodist Communications. "It captures the essence of what it means to be a United Methodist, showing who we are, where we've been, and where we're going."

Themed with the mission of "making disciples for the transformation of the world," the 2009-12 handbook prominently features The United Methodist Church's "Four Areas of Focus." The focus areas are key ministries affirmed and adopted



by the 2008 General Conference, which include: developing principled Christian leaders for the church and the world; creating new places for new people and renewing existing congregations; engaging in ministry with the poor; and stamping out the killer diseases of poverty by improving health globally. The handbook describes needs within each area, and outlines the denomination's strategies for meeting those challenges.

Additionally, new for 2009-12 are

detailed maps of central and jurisdictional annual conferences that show more fully how our connectional church serves around the world. Content also includes the mission and beliefs of United Methodists, the church's basic organization, and its history. Giving and online learning opportunities are highlighted, too.

"This handbook will assist you and your congregation to become more deeply acquainted with how The United Methodist Church lives out its mission every day," wrote Bishop Gregory Palmer, President of the Council of Bishops. "You will find resources that will coach forward your vision and capacity to do God's work in God's wonderful world."

Copies of the handbook are available at [www.umcsgiving.org](http://www.umcsgiving.org), or by calling (888) 346-3862.

## BIRTHS

Ivana (NC Conference controller) and Alonzo Cole announce the birth of a son, Lonnie on July 11.

Noah Wesley Larkins, son of Jessie Shuman Larkins (Durham District: Mount Sylvan, associate) and David, was born August 2.

## DEATHS

DAVIDSON, Barney Lee (Raleigh District: retired) died July 20. A service was held July 23 at First UMC, Cary.

RUDD, Robert J. (Rockingham: Retired) died July 21. The funeral service was held July 25 at Pee Dee UMC in Rockingham.

WOOTEN, Callie, widow of Rev. Charles Wesley Wooten, died July 26. A memorial service was held July 28 in Pikeville.

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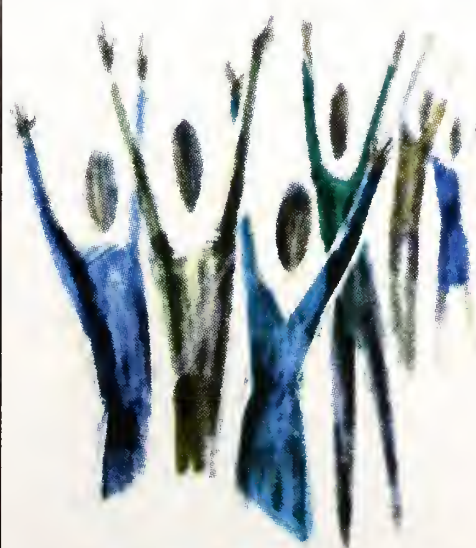
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# Oh, the Places You'll Go!

## Annual Conference Session for Youth Draws 325 Participants

By Sue Ellen Nicholson \*

The 58th Annual Conference Session (ACS) for United Methodist Youth was held at Methodist University in Fayetteville from July 20-25. The theme for the week was "Oh the Places You'll Go!" Dr. Jan Hill of First UMC, Pittsboro served as the worship leader and preacher for the week. A total of 325 youth and adult staff participated in the week with each district represented.

In addition to worship each day, youth and staff participated in small groups for spiritual growth.

The youth held legislative affairs sessions in which resolutions were debated on a variety of topics such as the Iranian Elections, Immigration Reform, Military Readiness Act, Human Trafficking, Habitual Offender Law, Neuse River Pollution, Mountain-Top Removal Coal Mining, Choking Game, Iranian Nuclear Program, Investigation of CIA Interrogation Policies, Sudanese President Bashir, The Wakefield Act, US Senate Bill 1038 on farm workers rights, Healthcare Crisis, and Economic and Travel Restrictions against Cuba.

Youth also participated in interest groups on topics related to spiritual life, leadership and current interests.

Evening programs for the week included group building games and an ice cream social, small group presentations, a dance, a talent show and a closing communion service.

One significant part of ACS was the election of the Conference youth officers for the 2009-2010 Conference year.

Hannah McMillan from the Rocky Mount District (First UMC-Rocky Mount) was elected

President. Jillian Hines from the Burlington District (Walnut Grove UMC) was elected Vice-President. Jolean Brann from the New Bern District (Swansboro UMC) was elected Secretary. Will Farnell from the Goldsboro District (Centenary UMC-Smithfield) was elected Treasurer.

Tory Soukup from the New Bern District (Northwoods UMC-Jacksonville) was elected LAP – Legislative Affairs Person.

The youth selected as members at large to the Conference Youth Committee were Clarence Brown (Fayetteville District), Sydney Evans (Durham District), Andrew Harper (Raleigh District), Altmann Lowry (Sanford District), Richard Macy (Rockingham District), Kristi McKenzie (Wilmington District) and Kathryn Wrench (Fayetteville District).

Selected as designated observers were Samantha Banks (Elizabeth City District), AJ Carroll (Greenville District), Griffin Carroll and Ali Santiago.

Previously elected (at middle school events Kaleidoscope and Breakaway) as junior high representatives are Madeline Graebe, Claire Johnson, Peter Norwood and Beth White.

Youth also met in district caucuses to select district representatives to the Conference Council on Youth Ministry, Youth Service Fund Task Force, Youth Newsletter Committee and Youth Resolutions Committee.

An installation service for this new leadership was held on Saturday morning.

ACS is held each year in July for high school age youth from churches across the North Carolina Conference.

Information about ACS and other youth opportunities is available from the Office of Youth Ministries at the Methodist Building Conference Office and online at [www.nccumc.org/youth](http://www.nccumc.org/youth).

\* Sue Ellen Nicholson is conference director of children, youth, and young adult ministries.



(L-R) Stephen Perry and Evan Rodriguez teamed up to raise money supporting the Methodist Home for Children's 1K for 1 Kid project.

## 2 Youth + 2 Days = "1K for 1Kid"

By Derek Leek \*

Stephen Perry and Evan Rodriguez are two youth who took on a great challenge. The challenge started Thursday, July 23rd, at the Annual Conference Session for Youth (ACS) when Donna Tate, development officer for the Methodist Home for Children (MHC), finished her presentation about the MHC.

During her presentation, Tate explained that children who are referred to MHC via Social Services, Mental Health and the Department of Juvenile Justice arrive with some funding, but to provide other services and activities, there is about a \$1000 gap.

To help fund this gap, MHC has a project called "1K for 1Kid." The project started in Port City with the United Methodist Men in the Wilmington District, and is now moving its way toward the youth of the North Carolina Conference.

At the end of Tate's presentation, she gave the "1K for 1Kid" challenge to the youth. She asked, "Who will be the first person to support a child for one year?"

Stephen Perry jumped at the idea and immediately went to the stage. Perry then recruited Evan Rodriguez to help raise the funds. Within two days the team raised a total of \$1543, enough to support 1.5 "kids."

Contributions came from the Conference United Methodist Women who were there for the School of Christian Mission, ACS youth, and the ACS staff in honor of Sue Ellen Nicholson, conference director of Children, Youth and Young Adults.

"Two days is the fastest anyone has ever completed the '1K for 1Kid' project," said Donna Tate.

This not only helps support a child at the MHC, but also affirms Tate's dream of having "youth support other youth."

\* Derek Leek is the NC Conference web ministries producer.



(L-R) Tory Soukup, legislative affairs person (LAP); Will Farnell, treasurer; Jolean Brann, secretary; Jillian Hines, vice-president; and Hannah McMillan, president. (Photo by Derek Leek)





# North Carolina Conference Christian ADVOCATE



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Pages 8-9

Volume 154 / Number 10

October 2009

## Fall gathering informs, inspires, renews NCC covenant community



Bishop Gwinn invited clergy attending the Bishop's Day Apart to gather in small discussion groups for responses to questions he presented. Included in the group above are (L-R) Donna Banks, Evergreen in the Burlington District; Richard Stone, Fuquay-Varina in the Raleigh District; Gary Murphee (back to camera), Washington Circuit in the Greenville District; and Faye Rouse, retired local pastor in the Greenville District. (Photo by Bill Norton)

By Para Drake \*

Pastors from across the NC Conference were welcomed to a "day of inspiration and information" by Bishop Al Gwinn to connect with new colleagues, reconnect with friends, renew their spirits, and experience the joys of fellowship. With the recognition of new pastors and the invitation of other clergy to welcome the new pastors, Bishop Gwinn convened the annual gathering of pastors for the Bishop's Day Apart on Tuesday, Sept. 15 at Nashville UMC.

The day featured information about the Clergy Health Initiative

being developed with support by the Duke Endowment, Duke Divinity School and the NC and Western NC Conferences, presentations by two Thriving Rural Congregations, and featured reflections based upon both scripture and Bishop Gwinn's reflections on Flora Schlussner Wuellner's book, *Fear and our Bodies*.

Dr. Howard Moore, managing director of Leadership Education at Duke Divinity School, noted that every pastor serves congregations along a continuum between "those that allow the pastor to mold them with time and love, as if at a potter's wheel and those who are granite-like and impervious to the pastor's work."

He observed, "We know some of those are difficult and the impact on you and your families is difficult." In this context, Moore continued, "The Clergy Health Initiative intends to meet you where you are and hopefully move you toward that which you already understand."

Dr. Rae Jean Proeschold-Bell, director of research for the initiative, spoke on the current climate of research and noted, "Not many people out there are trying to monitor or improve clergy health."

She spoke of the process of crafting a survey taken by clergy, noting that the one hour survey produced a phenomenal response (95%), "You responded because you take your

connection with each other seriously. You are conscientious."

Continuing, she said the present climate of concern over rising health

See "Fall gathering," page 4

## Church's top court convenes this month in Durham

By Neill Caldwell \*

The United Methodist Church's top court, the Judicial Council, will face a super-sized docket of 20 items and one in an emergency session when it meets in Durham this month.

Fourteen of the 21 items are reviews of bishop's decisions of law, which are automatically reviewed by the Judicial Council as directed by the denomination's *Book of Discipline*.

The nine-member Judicial Council will meet Oct. 28-31 at the Courtyard by Marriott hotel in Durham. Sessions are closed except for oral arguments which will begin at 10 a.m. on Oct. 29.

Both clergy and laity serve on the Judicial Council-four of one, five

See "Judicial Council," page 5

## Grant writing workshop held on-site and live over Internet

Through collaboration with Conference Communications and Information Technology, students participating in the Grant Writing Workshops by Dr. Annette Greer had the option of being present with her in Kinston or participating over the Internet from their personal computer.

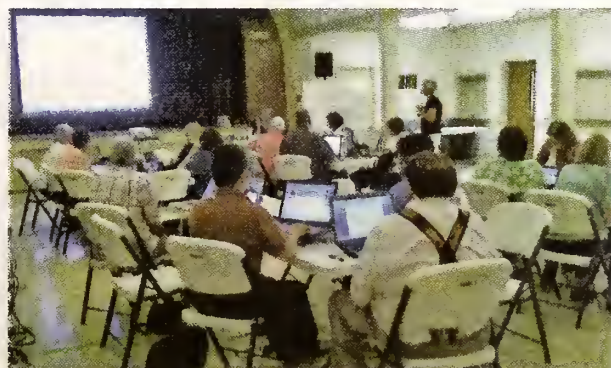
Dr. Greer used her extensive experience in writing grants and teaching the course to students pursuing careers in public health at East Carolina University to teach the techniques to lay and clergy in the NC Conference.

The workshops were taught at Westminster UMC in Kinston, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on the first three Mondays

in August. Participants were taught skills for writing and submitting grants, how to research and understand the priorities of funders, and how to develop strategic planning skills that lead to receiving on-going funding.

To enable more individuals to participate in the class, Conference

See "Grant writing," page 3



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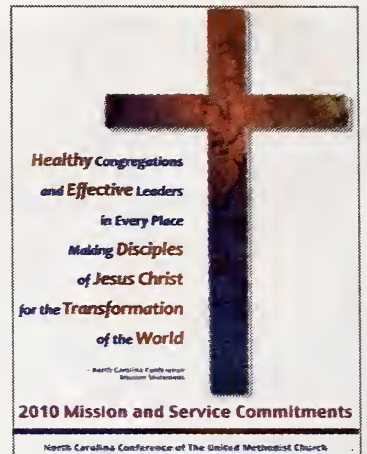


## 2010 Mission and Service Commitments

Enclosed with this edition of the NCCC Advocate is the 2010 Mission and Service Commitments booklet, which includes detail on the NC Conference ministry budget, information and forms for Rainbow Covenant churches, and stewardship resources from the Media Center.

The booklet is also available for download from the conference Communications Office webpage at <http://nccumc.org/communications/publications/>.

Additional printed copies may be requested from District Superintendents or by calling the conference Communications Office at 1-800-849-4433.



### Interactive workshop is being presented by Granger staff

Beginning with fewer than 10 people in 1986, Mark Beeson and his wife Sheila planted the seeds of Granger Community Church (GCC) in their Indiana living room.

Today, GCC is now a two campus facility with weekly attendance that tops 6,000 and programming that addresses the relevant needs of a thriving church community. Hundreds of members travel 40-60 minutes round trip to worship.

The leadership team of Granger will be sharing their tips and strategies with pastors, staff teams, laity and anyone who is inspired by their story on Nov. 10 at Edenton Street UMC in Raleigh.

Presented by the Academy for Leadership Excellence, the team has designed an interactive workshop to help churches develop and lead influencers, understand the relationship between church and culture, create WOW experiences and focus on effective team communication.

Registration for this event is \$100 and group discounts for three or more apply.

The Academy for Leadership Excellence is a not-for-profit organization devoted to the lifelong learning opportunities for pastors, staff and laity. Academy Days of Learning are ongoing throughout the year.

For a schedule of programs or to register, visit [www.nccumc.org/academy](http://www.nccumc.org/academy) or call 919-208-2169.



Mark Beeson



By Teresa Hodges \*

The NC Conference United Methodist Women School of Christian Mission was held July 22-25 at Methodist University in Fayetteville.

Sixty-five full-time students and over 210 commuters attended this year's classes.

The school started on Wednesday night with a plenary on National Assembly (May 2010).

Following the plenary, youth and their leaders from the Rockingham District shared their music and dancing skills. Many of the students joined in the circle dance.

On Thursday, the focus on Native American Study began with the study *Giving our Hearts Away*.

The study leaders were Dr. Ruth Woods, the Rev. Sylvia Collins-Ball and Gary Locklear, a Church and Community Worker and Home Missioner.

Thursday night, attention turned to *Sudan*. Judy Nutter, a former Women's Division director, presented her "First Person View of Sudan." Nutter traveled earlier in the year to Sudan with the General Board of Global Ministries.

Following the class was a time to enjoy a time of fellowship together with watermelon and a Native American dish – Fry Bread with homemade jams and jellies to go on top.



One of the three studies offered this summer at the UMW School of Christian Mission was on Sudan. In the top photo, Steve Taylor, NC Conference director of missions and justice addresses participants. The other presenters on Sudan included LaNella Smith and Judy Nutter, a former Women's Division director, who traveled earlier in the year to Sudan with the General Board of Global Ministries. (Photos by Derek Leek)

Friday's classes on the Sudan were led by Judy Nutter, LaNella Smith and Steve Taylor. Two classes started Friday night on the study *Food and Faith*, led by Brenda Brown and the Rev. Tom Greener. These classes were finished Saturday at noon.

The Rev. Grace Hackney and Brenda Ballard led a second class of the *Food and Faith* study on Saturday.

Many of the students in these

studies will go back and teach in their districts and local churches.

The date for the 2010 United Methodist Women School of Christian Mission is July 21-24. The study topics will be a repeat of the *Sudan Study*, *For the Love of God: John's Letters* and *Mission and Evangelism*.

\* Theresa Hodges serves as dean of the UMW School of Christian Mission.



# MERCI Center and Banded Brothers form partnership

*Editor's Note: In September, the MERCI Board formed a partnership with Banded Brothers to manage the day to day operations of the conference disaster response ministry located in Goldsboro. Following is the letter to the conference from the MERCI Board chair announcing the change. Due to the Advocate publishing deadline, a more detailed article will be included in the November Advocate.*

After a great deal of prayer and collaboration the Cabinet and Executive Committees of the Council on Finance and Administration, Trustees, Conference Connectional

Table, MERCI and Banded Brothers (a 501c3 non-profit organization) are pleased to announce that the MERCI Center is currently under new management.

Banded Brothers is an organization that was established out of response to hurricane Katrina and they have offered to come in and take the responsibility of managing the day to day operations of MERCI. This group of men has grown out of our own Fuquay-Varina UMC.

They have committed to engage United Methodist Men, United Methodist Women, United Methodist Youth and all willing people in

Disaster Relief efforts and other mission needs in the world.

Under the leadership of Charlie Gray, president of Banded Brothers, this group of predominantly United Methodist Men have the resources and volunteer base to assist in the reduction of overhead costs to allow

the ministry and mission of MERCI to continue. We ask for your prayers and support as this partnership between MERCI and Banded Brothers unfolds in the next few months.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rev. Suzanne Cobb  
MERCI Board Chair

## Native American Women's Gathering set for Oct. 16-18

SEJANAM, the Southeastern Jurisdictional Agency for Native American Ministries, and Lake Junaluska is hosting the first Native Women's Gathering and Conference Oct. 16-18. The theme of the event is "Re-Defining Our Place: Native Women Speak!"

Kicking off the event is the Rev. Cynthia Abrams, a member of the Seneca tribe and director for the Alcohol, Other Addictions, and Health Care Program for the General Board of Church and Society.

The keynote luncheon speaker is the Rev. Carol Gallagher. She is the first indigenous woman bishop in the Episcopal church and the only Native American serving in this capacity across religious denominations.

Leading worship will be the Rev. Donna Smith with the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, and Louisa Locklear and April Oxendine with the North Carolina Annual Conference.

"We are excited about this gathering since it is the first of its kind for this quadrennium. It will provide timely, highly relevant opportunities training around health and social concerns for Native American women across the Southeast Jurisdiction,"



April Oxendine (left) and Louisa Locklear (right) from the NC Conference will lead worship during the Native American Women's Gathering.

said Darlene Jacobs, director of SEJANAM.

One of the overall goals of the event is to serve as a tool to raise awareness on issues and needs for Native American women, while providing for spiritual broadening and understanding.

"We expect that women will leave the conference with strengthened skills on personal safety, security, health and

wellness, clearer personal tools for dealing with social and cultural issues unique to the Native American community and deepened relationships with the risen Christ and with each other," Jacobs said.

Some of the subject areas and activities include the psychology of cancer, domestic violence, substance abuse, tobacco and HIV/STDs.

The conference will also honor all of the national Native Women leaders within The United Methodist Church.

SEJANAM is the advocate for 23 Native American congregations and three other ministries in the Southeast Jurisdiction.

For event information, visit [www.lakejunaluska.com/events\\_detail.aspx?id=9488](http://www.lakejunaluska.com/events_detail.aspx?id=9488) or contact Darlene Jacobs, SEJANAM executive director, at 1-828-454-6724.

## Grant writing workshop from page 1

Communications and Information Technology worked together as a video streaming team to provide the daily sessions live over the Internet.

"This is one way the conference is exploring new avenues for training so participants can be better stewards of their time and to reduce the cost of transportation," said the Rev. Carol Goehring, conference director of connectional ministries.

"Conference offices are using more telephone conference calls and exploring several options for holding Webinars so boards and agency members can participate in meetings

from their home PC," Goehring said.

Two cameras were used during the classes so viewers could see and hear Dr. Greer and members of her class when questions were asked and answered given. Her class outline could be seen by both groups.

Students participating over the Internet sent questions by e-mail to the streaming team.

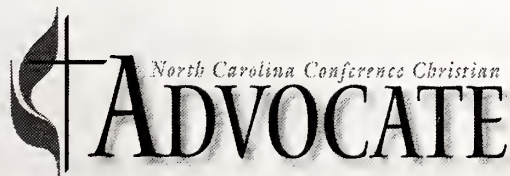
The questions were displayed on a large screen for the Kinston class and streaming participants to see. Dr. Greer reviewed the questions and shared answers for both groups to hear.

### NCC Christian Advocate Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation

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Total average copies printed during the preceding 12 months was 4333 with 2910 being paid circulation by mail; 1423 copies for office use and spoiled after printing. Actual number of printed copies of the September 2009 issue totaled 4000 with 2855 paid circulation by mail; 1145 for office use and spoiled after printing.



#### Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org).

Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

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**Contact:** [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org) or (919) 832-9560 with any questions.



## Fall gathering with Bishop informs, inspires, renews *continued from page 1*

care costs, the UMC leadership's concern for clergy health, and literature on clergy stress and longevity piqued the interest of The Duke Endowment's leadership who said, "We want to understand this better and do something about it."

Robin Swift, director of the Clergy Health Initiative, spoke of the development of the program focus groups and pilot, emphasizing the involvement of advisory groups of clergy, bishops in both conferences, Davidson College, Methodist hospital in Memphis, TN, and The Duke Endowment to create expertise in programming for health behavior change.



Rev. Gil Wise

The initiative, funded by a Duke Endowment grant, has completed a clergy survey designed to measure physical, mental, spiritual, and vocational health. Results of the survey are being used in a pilot-test program that offers a customized wellness plan for individual pastors over the next seven to 12 months. From the survey and pilot-test, results will be published and shared for the benefit of all clergy.

Reporting results of the surveys, Proeschold-Bell noted that in some areas of health, pastors surpass that of the general population, yet in other areas, pastors are far behind in well-being. When asked why there are complications in pastors' health statistics, Proeschold-Bell said the cause of the health problems is food. Obesity is becoming the social norm, stress is evident in clergy life, they take little time off for vacation, and clergy are not resting enough. She wondered "if clergy spiritual well being loosens clergy focus on physical well being."

The Rev. Carol Goehring, director of the Conference Connectional

### Clergy Health Initiative resources

- + [www.methodisthealth.org/methodist/About+Us/Faith+and+Health](http://www.methodisthealth.org/methodist/About+Us/Faith+and+Health)
- + [www.iceol.duke.edu/](http://www.iceol.duke.edu/)
- + [www.divinity.duke.edu/programs/health](http://www.divinity.duke.edu/programs/health)
- + On factors that influence clergy health: [www.faithandleadership.com/features/articles/holistic-approach-wellness](http://www.faithandleadership.com/features/articles/holistic-approach-wellness)

Ministries, introduced another Duke Endowment program, Thriving Rural Congregations, as fruitful in both Cedar Grove UMC in the Burlington District and Solid Rock UMC in the Fayetteville District.

An emphasis of Thriving Rural Congregations is to use these congregations as laboratories for teaching and practical experience for future small membership church leaders as well as present lay and clergy leaders.

The Rev. Grace Hackney, pastor of Cedar Grove, described "Come and See Cedar Grove" as an opportunity to invite folks to come to the community rather than "bringing people to the church." A Sunday filled with fellowship, food, worship, and open houses for local ministries, farms, and businesses was crowned with an afternoon ice-cream social at the parsonage.

Hackney noted that the event brought folks together to experience the "tables of the community" as they sauntered to visit neighbors and "to see if Jesus is residing there."

The Rev. Gil Wise, pastor of Solid Rock, said, "For us in Solid Rock, it's not about what we can do for ourselves, it's about sharing with you. When you come to Solid Rock, you can receive an importation of the ministry that you can take and do what God has called you to do where you are."

Introducing The Flood, a new youth program developed in partnership with Duke Divinity School, Wise offered to bring a band, about 100 youth and pizza to create youth events across the conference.



(L-R) Robin Swift and Dr. Rae Jean Proeschold-Bell

Mike Bass, associate pastor, announced that the Solid Rock School of Theology has received accreditation to offer several degree programs, including Doctor of Theology. Wise explained, "I'm tired of spending money on us – We need to spend the money on the people we want to reach – We're on this death spiral, spending money on ourselves."

"All over the conference we are hearing how God is equipping us in making disciples of Jesus Christ," Bishop Gwinn said concluding the day's presentations.

As the gathering shifted into a more reflective mode, Gwinn introduced the last session in which pastors would "talk with one another – to help the Lord build up your brothers and sisters. We are Christians under construction, even though we are the persons God has called us to be in Word, Sacrament, Order, & Service. We are in process; God is not through with us yet."

\* Para Drake is pastor of Core Creek UMC in the New Bern District.

### Four Ways God Transforms

Bishop Gwinn offered the following guide for reflection upon four ways God transforms, from *Fear and our Bodies* by Flora Schussler Wuellner:

- + Scriptural witness – does not deny our humanity or wipe out our identity
- + Unites us with our deepest longings. It's like being back home –
- + Involves our deep healings
- + Our inner unfolding rises from a living relationship with God rather than from laws and commandments

Use these questions as a guide:

- + What does it mean to be a fully alive human being?
- + What is my deepest longing?
- + What deep fear, anger, woundedness does God want to heal today?
- + What do I say to the One who is bringing the wind, the salt, the fire for the new creation?

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### State ban on plastic bottle disposal encourages stewardship of recycling

For many local churches, environmental stewardship is becoming an increasing concern. An upcoming development in North Carolina's recycling laws provides an opportunity for churches, and individuals to reflect on their stewardship and efforts to recycle.

Effective on Oct. 1, plastic bottles are banned from disposal. This ban supplements an earlier prohibition on the disposal of aluminum cans in North Carolina. The objectives of the disposal bans are not to catch people violating the law, but instead to stimulate the development of recycling programs and to encourage recycling behavior, the state Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance has announced.

For information regarding the disposal bans, with tips on how to start recycling efforts – visit: <http://www.p2pays.org/BannedMaterials/PlasticBottles/>



# Judicial Council convenes in Durham *continued from page 1*

of the other, alternating every four years. Members are elected for eight-year terms by General Conference and may not serve on any other United Methodist Board or Agency beyond the Annual Conference. Members are limited as to two consecutive terms. The council elects its own president for a four-year term.

Presently, the court includes four lay and five clergy members, headed by Susan Henry-Crowe, a clergywoman from the South Carolina Annual Conference and the first woman to head the council.

## North Carolina connections

It has been almost 25 years since the Council has met in the North Carolina Conference, a former Council member said. Current practice is for the Council meetings to rotate among the jurisdictions. One meeting this quadrennium is scheduled outside the US. When possible, the meetings are held near a divinity school.

Dr. Belton Joyner, an elder in the NC Conference, is a member and secretary of the Council. He was elected to the Council at the last General Conference. Before Dr. Joyner's election, the last person from the NC Conference to serve on the Council was The Rev. W. Lemuel Clegg in 1961.

## Ongoing debate

Several docket items relate to the church's ongoing debate over homosexuality. Baltimore-Washington Conference Bishop John Schol was asked to rule whether or not a human sexuality-related resolution was properly before the annual conference during its recent session.

The conference adopted the resolution, which used the language of a statement approved by the Church and Society II legislative committee of the 2008 General Conference but was not approved by the full legislative body meeting in Fort Worth.

That statement says in part, that "all are God's children of sacred worth, yet we have been, and remain divided regarding homosexual expressions of human sexuality. Faithful, thoughtful people who have grappled with this issue deeply disagree with one another, yet all seek a faithful witness." In his decision, Schol said that the resolution was not out of order.

The council will review Detroit Conference Bishop Jonathan Keaton's decision on the Reconciling Ministries Network, a caucus group which advocates full participation of all persons in all aspects of church life no matter their sexual orientation. A member of the annual conference requested a decision regarding local churches that identify themselves



The United Methodist Church's top court will face a super-sized docket of 20 items and one in an emergency session when it meets Oct. 28-31 in Durham. Fourteen of the 21 items are reviews of bishop's decisions of law, which are automatically reviewed by the Judicial Council as directed by the denomination's *Book of Discipline*. Sessions are closed except for the oral arguments which begin at 10 a.m. on Oct. 29. Members of the 2008-2012 Judicial Council from left are: Ruben Reyes, Dennis Blackwell, Kathi Austin-Mahle, Belton Joyner, Susan Henry-Crowe, Jon Gray, Angela Brown, Beth Capen and Bill Lawrence. (Photo by Neill Caldwell)

with the group. Keaton ruled that the questions did not relate to the business of the conference session and therefore did not meet the standards for a ruling.

## Also on the docket

There are many other cases that do not deal with sexual orientation. Bishop Larry Goodpaster of the Western North Carolina Conference decided that the conference's "Choice Empowerment" plan was in violation of the *Discipline*.

The plan, approved in 2004 and currently in use, allows local churches to pick and choose which apportionments they will pay. In his decision rejecting the plan, Goodpaster cited the closing line of Paragraph 247.14, which states "payment in full of these apportionments by local churches is the first benevolent responsibility of the church."

Bishop Schol also ruled on the authority of the Baltimore-Washington Conference's newly created "Adventure Guides" to conduct charge and church conferences. All district superintendents and most members of the conference program staff are "Adventure Guides," who are considered as members of the extended cabinet. These "Adventure Guides" work with pastors and churches to help them achieve the conference's vision.

In the Northwest Texas Conference, Bishop Max Whitfield ruled on a question related to the conference's vote on the 32 Constitutional amendments that were before all annual conferences this year. The question was referencing material distributed by a group or individu-

als calling themselves the Northwest Texas Renewal Fellowship.

The group referred to the information as a "guide" and distributed the material outside the bar of the Annual Conference. Conference rules do not address the distribution of materials outside the bar of the conference, thus the actions of the group did not violate conference rules. Whitfield ruled the request for a decision was improperly presented.

Bishop Elaine Stanovsky of the Rocky Mountain Conference is involved with two items, one involving clergy withdrawal between sessions of annual conference, and also one on the return to conference membership after resignation from the episcopacy. On Sept. 1, 2008, Edward Paup resigned as bishop of the Seattle Area to become chief executive of the UM General Board of Global Ministries. He has since stepped down from that position due to health reasons. Paup was returned to the role of active clergy in the Rocky Mountain Conference, but there is no Disciplinary question dealing with such action.

In other cases, the Commission on the General Conference seeks a ruling on whether or not Paragraphs 13 and 502.3 in the *Book of Discipline* place restrictions on any adjustment in the number of delegates to General Conference, the church's legislative body which meets every four years.

Those paragraphs deal with structure of the gathering and the representation of delegates, which cannot exceed 1,000 according to the *Discipline*. There has been talk of reducing the number of delegates due to financial concerns.

## Emergency session

Following action on the 20 items, the Council will adjourn and go into an emergency session to review a decision of law by Bishop Warner H. Brown, Jr. of the California-Nevada Annual Conference as to whether or not Paragraph 1506.7 permits the Annual Conference to adopt a past service annuity rate that remains the same from one year to the next.

Although Bishop Brown made his ruling in a timely fashion, the material was not received by the secretary of the Council in time for inclusion on the Fall docket.

The Council's decision on Bishop Brown's ruling has the potential to affect the pensions of retired clergy beginning in January 2010.

To delay consideration of this matter until the Council's April 2010 meeting could cause considerable confusion, including retroactive adjustment of pension rates for retired clergy and duplication of efforts in issuing checks.

*\* Neill Caldwell is editor of the Virginia United Methodist Advocate and has reported on numerous Judicial Council meetings for UM News Service.*

## Top of the Mountain Christmas Trees

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# Young clergy reach out to create relationships, evangelize in cyberspace

By Kathy L. Gilbert\*

Young United Methodist clergy see the elephant in the sanctuary – the fact more ministers are headed for retirement than the pulpits – and they are grabbing the mops.

The concerned under-35 crowd is doing what comes naturally. It is using social media – Facebook, Twitter and blogs – to form an online community to search for ways to draw more young people into ministry and into the pews.

A core group of 10 young clergy met with the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry in February. As a result, hundreds of young clergy are now talking and creating relationships in cyberspace through their own Web site, [www.umcyoungclergy.com](http://www.umcyoungclergy.com).

Throughout the denomination, young adults are responding to the evangelism challenge in several ways, from sharing their own stories about the ordination process to creating campaigns such as “40 Days of Prayer,” and “6 Questions for The United Methodist Church.”

The need is critical, research shows. The number of people under 35 ordained or on the track to be ordained dropped from 3,210 in 1985 to 910 in 2008, according to a study by the Lewis Center for Church Leadership at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington. The average age of elders is 52; for ordained deacons it is 51.

“I decided I owed it to the church that raised me, paid for my college and seminary to ask the tough questions,” blogged Jenny Smith, a 26-year-old master of divinity student at United Theological Seminary who took part in the February

meeting. “We decided it was time to name the elephants in the room for young clergy. When you know where the elephant is, it’s easier to clean up after it.”

## Prayer first

The idea of calling young leaders to pray for 40 days for The United Methodist Church came from something God placed on the heart of Ben Simpson, 29, an ordained Baptist minister married to the Rev. Molly Simpson, an associate pastor at The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kan.

“God took me by surprise,” said Simpson, also a member of Resurrection Church. “I was responding in obedience. I didn’t have any grand or lofty expectations when I put that project out there.”

He e-mailed 17 friends and colleagues and posted a blog spelling out his vision. In two weeks, Simpson had 30 volunteers to write prayers, and at the end of six weeks he had more than enough to complete the campaign.

“40 Days of Prayer for the United Methodist Church” began May 18. Prayers were posted every day through June 25. An average of 550 people visited the Web site during the first several days. A prayer guide was published.

The prayers are deeply personal, and from day one, there was no mincing of words.

“Today we confess our sins as a denomination,” wrote the Rev. Andrew Conard, associate pastor at The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection, on the first day. “We confess that some of what we have done and some of what we have left undone has contributed to the mess in which we find ourselves and our denomination today. The United Methodist Church in North America has become a shell of what was once a vibrant movement spreading scriptural holiness across the land.”

The 40 days ended with hope.

“We’ve laid everything out before you,” Smith concluded on day 40.

“It’s not pretty. We’re broken. But hopeful.”

## Asking the right questions

The next inspiration came to Conard, who wondered: What are the right questions?

“6 Questions for The United Methodist Church” was inspired by a quote from the Rev. Lovett Weems, author of *The Crisis of Younger Clergy*. He said, “Leaders do not need answers. Lead-

ers must have the right questions.”

A 44-second YouTube video explains: “Our church has one mission, 3 simple rules, 4 areas of focus, 5 practices and now 6 questions.”

The campaign raises questions for next steps in the life of the church to provide guidance for future gatherings and shape the discourse across the denomination.

Some of the top questions include:

- ♦ In what ways do you feel responsible for the ministry that happens through your church?
- ♦ How are you equipping the members of the church to live faithfully, integrating their faith into their daily lives and work?
- ♦ How can we help (eliminate diseases of poverty) in a way that is more than just giving money?

## Signs of encouragement

And the effort keeps expanding.

Smith has launched a project to help young people interested in ministry discern their calling. She has asked bloggers to publish a post on how it feels to have a call to ministry.

One of the contributors is the Rev. Becca Clark, an ordained elder in the Troy Annual Conference.

“The hardest part of discerning a call to ministry for me was believing it was possible,” she wrote.

“I really didn’t think I was a good candidate, spiritually speaking. At the time I heard my call, I’d never read the whole Bible. I wasn’t much of a churchgoer. I was pretty new to that whole taking-religion-seriously thing, and I had doubts about a lot of the things I thought Christians Are Supposed to Believe.”

Simpson is working with the United Methodist Publishing House on a new book on “Becoming a Praying Congregation,” a collection of inspiration and ideas for encouraging prayer throughout a congregation.

“Historically, the prayers of the church have been formed by our worship, through times of private devotion and in consultation with trusty printed resources,” Simpson said.

But with recent advances in Web technology and social media tools, new forms have become available to us that enable us to come together in prayer in new and innovative ways.”

One of the images on the young clergy Web site seems to sum up the conversation among young leaders.

It depicts a young man on the side of the road, holding up a sign: “Hope ahead.”

\* Kathy Gilbert is a news writer for United Methodist News Service in Nashville, Tenn.

## Talbert Institute develops African-American leaders

UMNS — The new Bishop Melvin George Talbert Leadership Institute is seeking up to 20 young African Americans to commit two to four years to becoming creative leaders in The United Methodist Church.

Black Methodists for Church Renewal announced last year plans to form an institute named after Talbert.

Located at the group’s Nashville headquarters, the institute was launched in July.

Talbert has led The United Methodist Church as pastor, agency executive and bishop.

He was active in the civil rights movement and at one point shared a jail cell with the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

## Fight against poverty focuses on green jobs

UMNS—The UM Board of Church and Society is among 33 organizations that are speaking with one voice on the importance of making poverty reduction a central component of programs and policies aimed at creating a clean-energy economy.

The national faith-based organizations have committed to participating in an interfaith week of action, “Fighting Poverty with Faith,” Oct. 14-21, to urge elected officials to make poverty-reduction a key goal of the transition to a green economy. Further information is available at <http://fightingpovertywithfaith.com/f2/>.

## UMM executive resigns position

UMNS—The top staff executive of United Methodist Men is returning to his first love, the local church. In a letter of resignation, the Rev. David C. Adams told the Commission on United Methodist Men he was honored to serve as general secretary of the agency for the past three years, but he missed serving a local church. The commission has appointed a search committee for a successor.

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# Teaching self-sufficiency, doing God's work in Africa

By Joe Parker \*

In July, a 14-member mission team from Hayes Barton UMC, Raleigh, learned first hand in Butare, Rwanda the effectiveness of the Giving Hope Empowerment Project in enabling orphan families in Africa to become self-sufficient.

ZOE Ministry began in 2004 and expanded to include the Giving Hope Empowerment Project in 2007. ZOE is led by the Rev. Greg Jenks of Holly Springs, a clergy member of the NC Conference. ZOE's mission is caring for African orphans.

Seed money to begin Giving Hope in Rwanda came from \$75,000 raised by Hayes Barton in 2007 in excess of needs to send a medical mission team to Zambia. The church voted to leave the money in Africa to further ZOE's work.

The team that traveled to Rwanda in July had the dual mission of assisting in the building of a home for an orphan family and visiting nearly 20 orphan families that are enrolled in Giving Hope to hear their stories first hand and report back to the church and the conference.

The team was made up of seven women and seven men ranging in age from 19 to 77. It was led by Ed Kuczynski, who was part of the 2007 Zambia medical mission, and traveled to Rwanda last year with a team from Apex UMC. Hayes Barton's senior pastor, Rick Clayton, was also a team member.

Scheduling the team's program was Rwandan native Epiphanie Mujawimana who developed Giving Hope and is its project director. She accompanied the team daily during its two weeks in country.

Mujawimana has visited in the NC Conference each of the past two years and will return again in November.

She reports that the program is now serving 1,836 orphan families in Rwanda made up of 6,700 individual children. In addition, the program has expanded into nearby Kenya



The Giving Hope program teaches orphans skills including farming and animal husbandry. Raising farm animals, such as the goat the boy in the center has just received, is an important first step toward transforming the lives of vulnerable orphans. The animals provide manure for fertilizing food crops, nourishment, and income as they reproduce.

where an additional 979 orphan families (totaling 4,010 children) are being served.

An orphan family entering Giving Hope's three year program typically begins with little knowledge about life skills for self-sufficiency.

Families begin with instruction in basics such as health, hygiene and AIDS prevention as well as training in farming and animal husbandry.

From the beginning, families learn the importance of accomplishing program goals and are so proud as they achieve program standards as well as the dreams they set for themselves.

The program leaders organize the families into Working Groups through which the children can find support. They begin by working on safe housing for themselves and others, as well as other group projects such as community gardens and coffee plantations.

Early in their first year, families work hard to accomplish the standards that earn a goat—an important step to economic independence in Rwanda. Goats were presented to 50 families at a ceremony the team attended during their second week in country. Before a goat

was presented to each head of household (usually the oldest sibling), the team was entertained with a comedy the orphans had written about their Giving Hope experience. The lead in the play was a young boy, head of his household, playing the part of a very animated Jenks.

The next day the team ran into the Jenks actor, hoe in hand, working on a group project helping another new Giving Hope family. His presence was an object lesson about how working together for the greater good is being learned by those Giving Hope is reaching.

This year is the 15th since the genocide of 1994 in which a million Rwandans died. In every community throughout the country, one day a week, virtually every adult gathers for Reconciliation Day.

During this day, neighbors talk out their feelings and acknowledge what they did to each other during the genocide. Also at these meetings, charges are brought against those who committed the most atrocious offenses, first step toward a later judicial trial.

Those charged and awaiting trial wear distinctive pinkish prison garb. The team observed several groups of these prisoners being escorted along the roadside under armed guard, a reminder of Rwanda's recent past.

As the country rebuilds, the work of non-governmental agencies like ZOE is welcomed by most of its elected leadership. A photograph of the Rwandan president, Paul Kagame, hangs in Mujawimana's outer office.

The team's first full day in Butare, a provincial capital in the south, began with a meeting with the city's mayor.

He expressed thanks for the work Giving Hope was doing in and around his area. At several locations, other local leaders met with the team, also expressing their thanks.

The first half of almost every work day for the team was spent up a red dirt road in Kigoma village, Huye district, an hour's drive from Butare. The team worked with others on a house being built for Joseline and her three younger sisters, ages 18, 16 and 12. Joseline became head of household at 11 when their mom died of AIDS, three years after their father died.

Most team members were engaged in making mud balls and passing them on to be daubed on the sides and interior walls of the multi-room home to seal cracks. Later, cement would cover the daubing and a sheet metal roof would be added.

On the team's last day at work the home was dedicated by Clayton. Mujawimana interpreted for the many Rwandans present.

Most afternoons were spent visiting families who embody Giving Hope's effectiveness. Among those visited was a family beginning its third year. In the second year, the kid from the first year's goat was sold for five rabbits raised for their meat. The first rabbit litter was 32 and the family is now well on its way to economic independence.

At the end of the visits to most homes, the head of household would offer a prayer for the hearts, minds and souls of the team members.

As one member remarked, those from the affluent U.S.A. have spent lifetimes praying for poor Africans. "It touches your heart for one of them to be praying for you," the team member said.

At the conclusion of their trip, the team expressed no doubt that the money from the NC Conference being used by ZOE Ministry is doing the Lord's work.

\* Joe Parker is a member of Hayes Barton UMC in Raleigh and was a member of the July team to Rwanda.



The Hayes Barton workteam helped build a home which was dedicated by the Rev. Rick Clayton. Epiphanie Mujawimana interpreted for the many Rwandans present.



# Introducing Ramus — A Local Church Web Hosting Project

By Derek Leek \*

In 2002, the NC Conference first began the Local Church Website Hosting project as a joint collaboration between Conference Communications and Information Technology departments. The hope was to offer basic websites and web hosting to all churches in the NC Conference.

When building a site, a local church must think about the cost of software and the learning curve of the software and HTML/CSS. The Conference originally supported software, like Microsoft FrontPage, which made creating/editing sites easier. It was considered to be a leader in its class, but Microsoft discontinued producing FrontPage several years ago.

Now, the Conference has entered a new and exciting phase of helping local churches with websites. Recently, Communications and IT departments revamped the local church hosting project in the hopes that it would enable more churches to create an effective website.

This new phase is called Ramus. What is Ramus? The word *ramus* is defined as a projected part, elongated process, or branch.

Ramus is available to local churches and ministries within the NC Conference. With four branches, or options, a ministry has the ability to create and manage a church website easily and at a low cost. The four branches are listed in the Ramus Tree diagram to the right of this article.

Moving away from web software requiring training and websites that required knowledge of HTML, the Conference now supports WordPress, a software package which includes many features including free templates that eliminate the need for special HTML or design knowledge and a straightforward interface.

Using WordPress, local churches can get an up-to-date site quickly and edit the site from wherever there is Internet access. For a list of all the features of WordPress, visit [www.wordpress.org](http://www.wordpress.org).

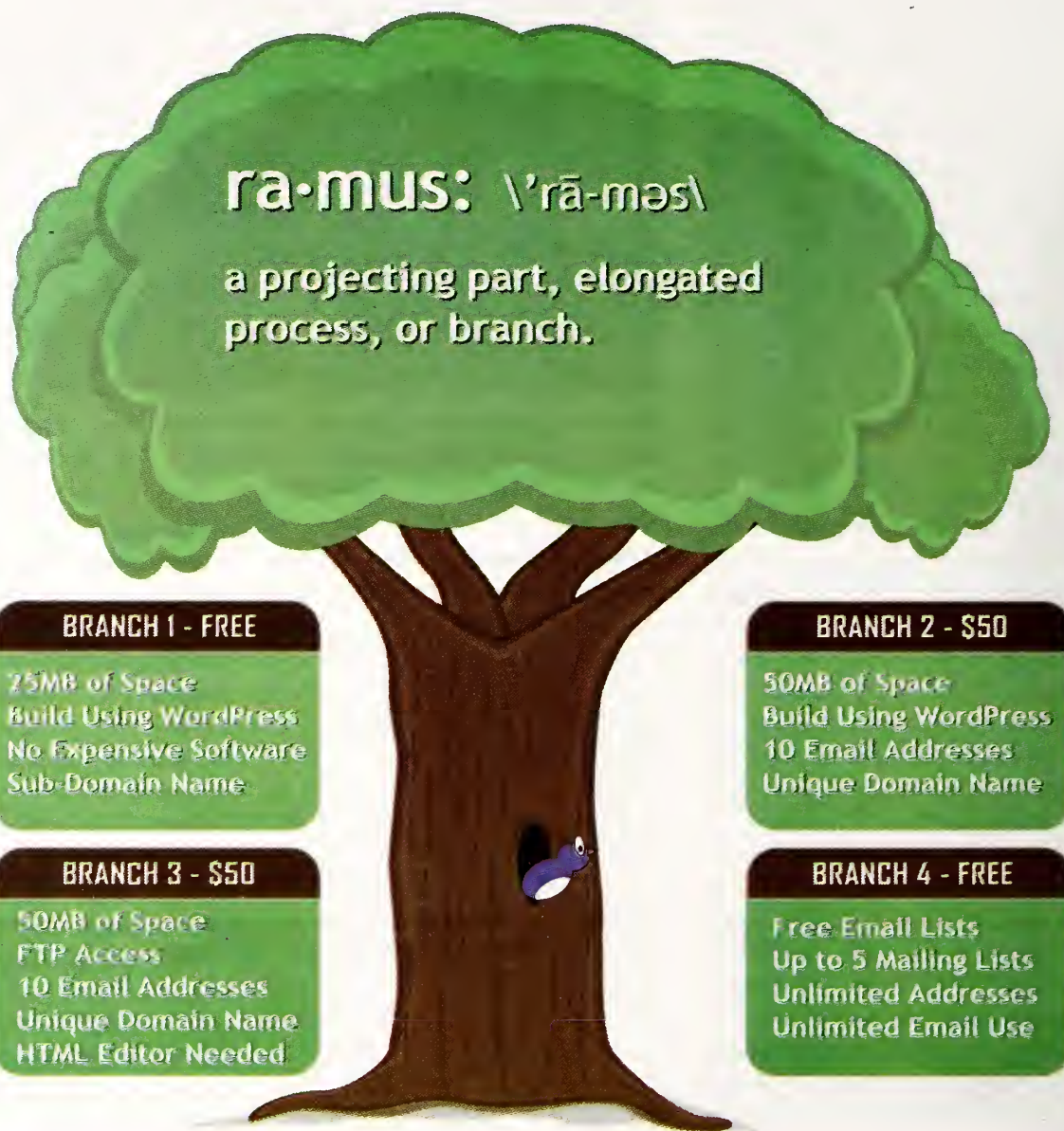
If a local church or related ministry prefers to use something other than WordPress, one of the Branches allows the flexibility to use an HTML editor to create and upload files to a blank directory via File Transfer Protocol (FTP).

To help churches get started, there are video tutorials available at the NCCUMC Web Ministry page ([www.nccumc.org/web](http://www.nccumc.org/web)). Future plans for the Conference Web Ministry include workshops, more online tutorials and on-site help for church website needs.

The Conference wants to offer all churches, large or small, the opportunity to grow in web ministry. Consider signing-up online at [www.nccumc.org/ramus](http://www.nccumc.org/ramus).

Contact Derek Leek ([dleek@nccumc.org](mailto:dleek@nccumc.org)), or Linda Smith ([lsmith@nccumc.org](mailto:lsmith@nccumc.org)), or call 1-919-832-9560 or 1-800-849-4433 for information.

\* Derek Leek is the NC Conference web ministries producer.



## Dictionary Terms \* Definitions adapted from Wikipedia.com and Google.com

**Blog:** (a contraction of the term "weblog") is a type of website, usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video.

**CMS (Content Management System):** A computer application used to manage work flow needed to collaboratively create, edit, review, search, publish and archive digital media and electronic text.

**CSS (Cascading Style Sheets):** A style sheet language used in conjunction with a markup language, like HTML, to describe the look and formatting of a document.

**Domain:** An identification label that defines a realm of administrative authority or control in the Internet. Example: [nccumc.net](http://nccumc.net). An example of a subdomain (second level) is: [churchname.nccumc.net](http://churchname.nccumc.net)

**FTP (File Transfer Protocol):** A network protocol used to exchange and manipulate files over the Internet.

**HTML (Hyper Text Markup Language):** The predominant markup language used to write web pages.

**HTML Editor:** Software that allows you to create/display HTML pages. Most software packages come with a WYSIWIG editor. Software examples are Adobe Dreamweaver and Microsoft Expression Web.

**Open Source:** An approach to the design, development, and distribution of software, offering practical accessibility to software's source code.

**RSS:** Really Simple Syndication, or Rich Site Summary. A way for websites to distribute their content beyond site visitors using browsers. Subscribers receive feeds containing regular updates, delivered automatically via a web portal, news reader, or in some cases email.

**WordPress:** a state-of-the-art, open source publishing platform with a focus on aesthetics, web standards, and usability. ([www.wordpress.org](http://www.wordpress.org))

**WYSIWYG:** is an acronym for "What You See Is What You Get," used in computing to describe a system in which content displayed during editing appears very similar to the final output.



Visit Ramus online at  
[www.nccumc.org/ramus](http://www.nccumc.org/ramus)



# Small church sees Ramus as “a game changer”

The new website services from the Annual Conference are wonderful. I went to the workshop at Annual Conference and knew for small churches like Pine Valley, this is a game changer.

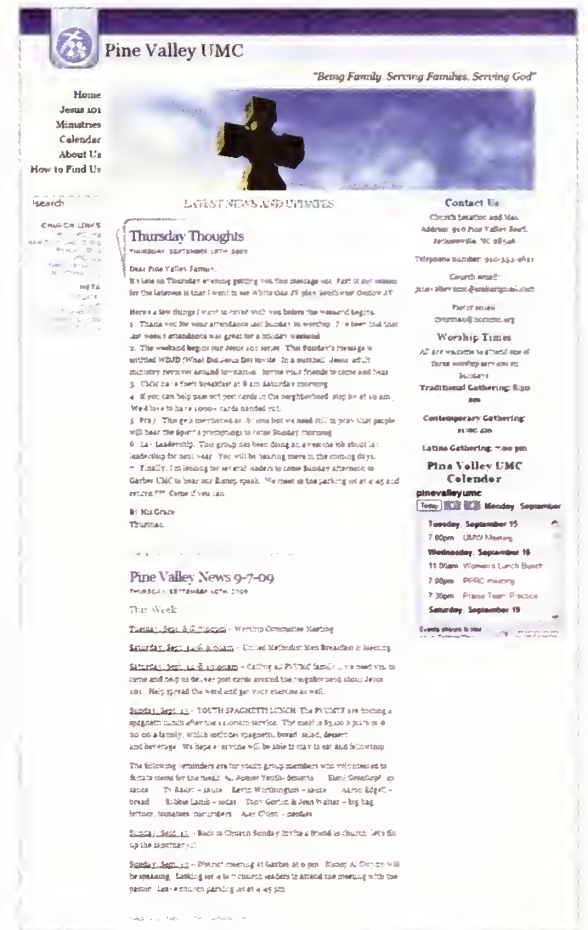
For a small church this offers the following reasons for using the service:

1. It is free.
2. It has a professional look.
3. It has simple coding requirements (no need to take extensive classes to set up and run the webpage).

In the nearly three months Pine Valley has used the services, we are happy with the ease of adding content to the page. We’ve added Google Calendar (also free) to track church events. We’ve also looked at changing the template to give us additional features which are also free.

Finally, we wanted a domain name that reflected who we are. Doug and Derek offered us the registration and management of the domain name for \$50 over three years. This is a bargain as we are not responsible for remembering when to re-up for our domain name.

For any small to medium size church, the website service is a bargain. It is simple, and you can have a professional webpage in very little time.



<http://pinevalleyumc.org>

Thurman Horney, Pastor  
Pine Valley UMC  
Jacksonville  
New Bern District

## Ramus options are user-friendly, customizable, and powerful

The Elizabeth City District web site uses the newest technology from the NCCUMC web ministry. It is the content management system (CMS) “WordPress.” Having worked with many CMS options while Director of Communications at the SEJ (including Mambo, Joomla, Typo3, and others), I find WordPress to be very user-friendly, customizable and powerful.

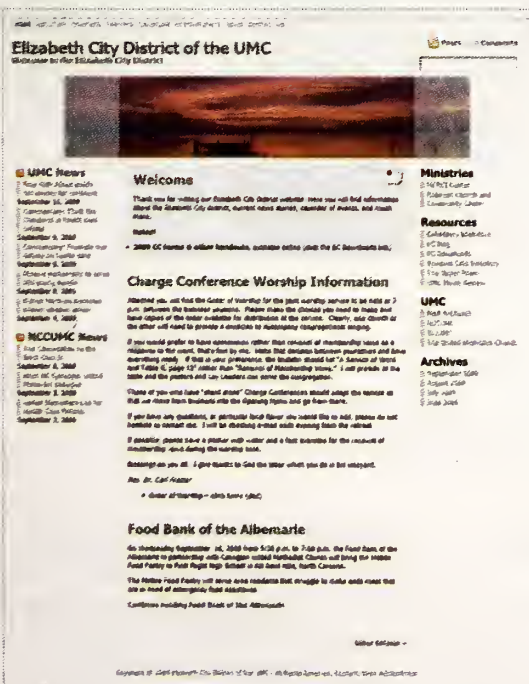
The site has many advanced features, including blogs, RSS feeds, media selection and more. I highly recommend the NCCUMC web hosting project for your local church, as well as district and other ministries.

Below is a comparison of three popular CMS systems in the areas of Deployment (installation and setup of the CMS); User-Friendly (selections, layout, access); Scalability (ability to grow, add modules, themes, etc):

- WordPress, Deployment- Great, User Friendliness - Great, Scalability- Great
- Typo3: Deployment- Difficult, User Friendliness - limited, Scalability- Great
- Joomla: Deployment- Good, User Friendliness- Good, Scalability- Great

Jerome Smith

Pastor Bethany UMC, Wanchese and Founding webmaster of NCCUMC.org



<http://elizabethcitydistrictumc.org/>

**WordPress**

Learn more about WordPress at [www.wordpress.org](http://www.wordpress.org)

## Church Mice







By Patricia Walker Murphy \*

New Hope UMC became a Holy Land Roman adventure for children and adults the week of Aug. 3-7.

The children and adults discovered what it might have been like to live, work, and worship Jesus in Rome during the early 60's A.D. At Rome: *Paul and the Underground Church Vacation Bible School (VBS)*, families were transported back in time where they experienced new traditions, crafts, foods, and were part of the beginning of the Christian church.

VBS began each evening with an Italian meal. Kathy and George Brizius, New Hope UMC's Roman chiefs for the week cooked for over 100 people. "It's great how everyone pitched in and helped out by bringing food. Gene Corona made all of the delicious desserts. We are certainly blessed at New Hope," said Kathy.

After the meal, groups gathered in their different "Roman Families," put on their family sashes, sang about God's love, and prepared for their travels through Rome. Their trav-

els began with a visit to the Apostle Paul, who was under house arrest and chained to the Roman guard, Brutus Flavious Marco. As the days passed the children saw a change in Brutus who was anti-Christian but on the last day of VBS he decided to follow Jesus.

Pastor Bill Masciangelo said, "This year's VBS was built on the success of last year's Jerusalem-theme Bible School. As a Church family, we took it to higher level.... The sheer number of participants, adults, young children, and teens was very impressive. Everyone was outstanding. Lindsay Chambers, the director of VBS went all out to provide us with the necessary props and tools."

"VBS immersed children and adults in daily discoveries about God's love. They learned about the culture of Bible times, and they saw what life may have been like as the church was just beginning," stated Masciangelo.

After their visit with Paul, children and adults slipped away through a dark cave in order to reach the Underground Church. It was here that they met secretly with the Chris-

tians, Lucia and Marcus for the Bible message of the day.

"What I liked about this VBS series is that it was living history. The children actually took part in the days of ancient Rome where Christians were not free to worship Jesus. Instead they had to hide in a cave to worship. That is what we did...we showed them what it was like during that time, even to the point of having Roman soldiers trampling outside of the cave looking for Christians," said Susan Masciangelo.

"We placed the fish symbol on everyone's hand. In ancient Rome when you met someone you would draw a curved half of the fish symbol in the sand and if the other person was a follower of Christ they would make the second curved mark to complete the fish symbol. That way you knew you were among Christian friends," she added.

After visiting the Underground Church, families

explored the crowded Roman marketplace. Along the way, they encountered Roman guards, Senators, slaves, and many other characters during "real life" dramas that took place in the marketplace. The book of Romans served as a framework for the daily events.

Beth Strecker said, "This program was wonderful for my child who is five years old. My daughter wanted to come back each day because she was comfortable and felt welcome."

Families were involved with hands-on learning experiences at the different marketplace shops. The children were given gold coins each day to spend on a delicious snack such as rat on a stick (it was really chicken). The coins were also used to learn different crafts like making a laurel wreath, abacus, bulla, wooden

top, and leather wristband. They discovered how to play in the Roman apprenticeship games, went to the animal sacrifice sales, and learned about Roman architecture.

"I didn't want VBS to end. It was so much fun. I really liked the metal working which was my favorite," said Gracie.

Ruby agreed and said, "I really liked the games and I learned Bible verses. I'd like to come back again next year."

"VBS was alright. I learned that God can do great things. This was a good experience...all of it," said Jacob.

"The children were really involved and they moved quickly from shop to shop which kept their attention. It was really great, especially the marketplace drama involving the thief. This has been so much better than when we went to Bible School. We stayed in one class and ate cookies," said Marvin Ownley.

After the marketplace experiences, families gathered to discuss what they had learned, how it related to the Bible, and how it all applied to daily life! Each evening ended in praising God through motions and music.

Lindsay Chambers the Director of the Children's Ministry and VBS said, "What an exciting week. Families met Paul, experienced the power of Scripture and the courage of the early Christians from the Underground Church. This year VBS at New Hope UMC, I pray, was a memorable learning and powerful experience for both the children and adults."

New Hope UMC is located at the corner of New Hope and Woodville Road in Hertford.

\* Patricia Walker Murphy is on the writing staff at New Hope UMC.



The VBS participants were divided into four different Roman Families (e.g., Maximus, Octavius, and Pompeius) and were identified by their sash color. Families were transported back in time to live, work, and worship Jesus in Rome during the early 60's A.D.

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## World Communion Sunday

The World Communion Scholarship office is getting more calls than ever from U.S. students saying the tough economy is making it harder for them to manage educational costs. Scholarships for international students are being hit hard. Many of these students come from economically stressed countries with few financial options.

Last year, the World Communion Sunday offering was down, and a drop in giving is projected for this year as well. While the suggested date for celebrating World Communion Sunday is Oct. 4, local churches can receive an offering for this ministry at any time. For resources to promote World Communion Sunday, go to [www.umcgiving.org](http://www.umcgiving.org) and select Special Sundays.

## Gatherings for Local Pastors and Associate Members coming soon

The Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members has planned informative meetings of encouragement and fellowship with Bishop Al Gwinn. These will be times to have questions answered concerning ministry, and a time of sharing with each other.

Bishop Gwinn will hold three meetings: Oct. 17- Roseboro UMC (Fayetteville District); Oct. 31 - Newland UMC (Elizabeth City District); and Nov. 21 - Stonewall UMC (New Bern District). Meetings begin at 10 a.m. and end at 12:30 p.m., with a break for refreshments. For additional information, contact Margaret Hockett at [mhockett@nccumc.org](mailto:mhockett@nccumc.org) or 910-791-4092.

## NC Episcopal-United Methodist Dialogue continues Oct. 19

The next gathering of the North Carolina Episcopal-United Methodist Dialogue will be at Mt. Pleasant UMC near Greensboro at 3 p.m., Monday, Oct. 19. At 7 p.m., Episcopal and United Methodist bishops will lead a service of reaffirmation of the baptismal covenant.

Congregations within driving distance of Greensboro may wish to invite their members to be a part of this significant joint service. Persons attending the afternoon session and planning to remain for the evening service can reserve a snack supper by sending a check for \$5.00 made payable to "North Carolina Conference," to the attention of LeeAnne Thornton, P. O. Box 10955, Raleigh, North Carolina 27605.

Mt. Pleasant UMC is off I-85 at exit 132. For questions, contact Patricia Page ([patnpage@yahoo.com](mailto:patnpage@yahoo.com)) or Belton Joyner ([fbjnr2@msn.com](mailto:fbjnr2@msn.com)).

## Workshop on effective small membership ministry

Hinton Rural Life Center is hosting the workshop, "The Small Membership Church: Keys to Effective Ministry" featuring Ron and Bonnie Crandall and the yet-to-be named executive secretary of Rural/Urban Networks of GBGM.

This event will be Feb. 22-24, 2010. The registration fee for the three-day event is \$125 plus room and board. To see a brochure, go to [http://www.hintoncenter.org/Keys\\_Workshop\\_Brochure.pdf](http://www.hintoncenter.org/Keys_Workshop_Brochure.pdf).

## Family fun at amusement parks

The NC Conference United Methodist Family Fun Days at Kings Dominion and Carowinds have been extended to the weekends of October. Discount tickets are available to NC Conference UM church groups at a significant savings from the regular price.

Tickets may be purchased online at [www.kingsdominion.com](http://www.kingsdominion.com) or [www.carowinds.com](http://www.carowinds.com) – select "tickets" then "corporate partner" and the company ID is "fallmfd." For all tickets redeemed at the parks, a contribution is made to the Conference Youth Service Fund.

## Chestnut Ridge to consecrate green burial place October 11

At 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 11, Chestnut Ridge will consecrate one acre of land alongside Lake Fellowship as an EcoEternity Forest an alternative green burial concept where memorial trees are chosen as final resting places for the cremated ashes of loved ones. Bishop Al Gwinn and Camp Director, the Rev. Rhonda Parker, will conduct the consecration service. In the EcoEternity Forest, the forest floor under mature forest trees is chosen as dedicated, final resting places for the ashes of individuals, families, or friends. Memorial trees are selected by visiting an EcoEternity Forest and selecting a mature tree.

## Lay Academy for Christian Witness

The Conference Commission on Evangelism is sponsoring the Academy for Christian Witness for Laity Oct. 15-17 at Camp Rockfish. The cost is \$25 per person. For more information and a registration form, go to: <http://nccumc.org/files/laywa.pdf>.

## Finding Jesus on Facebook

The Conference Safe Sanctuaries Committee is sponsoring a series of workshops for adults in ministry among children and youth entitled "Finding Jesus on Facebook." The workshop will address issues of cybersafety as well as ministry among the Internet generation. Participants will receive materials to use in their local churches. There is no cost to attend the workshop although anyone planning to attend should notify Robin Harry ([rharry@nccumc.org](mailto:rharry@nccumc.org)) about the attendance date and location. The workshop will be held on Saturday mornings from 10 a.m. to 12 noon as follows:

- † Oct. 17 at Jarvis Memorial UMC in Greenville;
- † Nov. 7 at Haymount UMC in Fayetteville;
- † Nov. 21 at Soapstone UMC in Raleigh.

More information about the workshop and how to register plans to attend can be found at [www.nccumc.org/children/safe-sanctuaries/](http://www.nccumc.org/children/safe-sanctuaries/).

conference CALENDAR			
October		November	
1	Conference Connectional Table (CCT), 10am, UMB	3	Communications Committee, 2pm , UMB
3	Board of Laity mtg., 9:30am, UMB	6	World Community Day
4	World Communion Sunday	10	Leadership Academy Days of Learning
5	Golf Fundraiser for MERCI Center	13-15	Pilgrimage for Youth Groups, Fayetteville, NC
8	Advocate Advisory Board., 2pm., UMB	14	Conference UMW DO-IT-DAY
10	Conference UMW Annual Meeting, Methodist University, Fayetteville	20-22	UMW Leadership Training Event (LTE)
12-13	Christian Educators Fellowship (CEF) Retreat; Camp Agape, Fuquay-Varina, NC	26-27	Methodist Building Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday
15-17	Academy of Christian Witness for Laity, 10am Camp Rockfish	29	UM Student Day
		NC Conference events are online at <a href="http://www.nccumc.org/calendar">www.nccumc.org/calendar</a>	





By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

## November 1, 2009

**Text: 1 Peter 1:13-25**  
**"A Holy People"**

United Methodists ought to be aware that from time to time parts of the family have split away because they felt most of us had forgotten about holiness. (For example, The Church of the Nazarene, The Wesleyan Church, The Free Methodist Church, and Pentecostal Holiness churches formed in large part because of a perceived lack of emphasis on holiness among Methodists.)

This week's study text calls us back to a basic New Testament teaching: God's people are to be a holy people. Theologians call it "sanctification."

The Confession of Faith of The Evangelical United Brethren Church (one of the doctrinal standards of The United Methodist Church) says, "We believe sanctification is the work of God's grace through the Word and the Spirit, by which those who have been born again are cleansed from sin in their thoughts, words, and acts, and are enabled to live in accordance with God's will, and to strive for holiness without which no one will see the Lord."

That's strong talk. How's our walk?

1 Peter 1:13 offers three ingredients for the holy life:

- Preparation—holiness does not "just happen"; holy living is the harvest of intentional openness;
- Discipline—holiness is an ongoing journey requiring holy habits, drawing upon the means of grace;
- Grace—finally, sanctification is a gift of God's unmerited love freely given in Jesus Christ. The one who lives a holy life walks that walk because of the abundance of God's grace.

Do you know someone like that?

Today is All Saints' Day and a good time to remember those whose journey marked them as part of "A Holy People." The names on my list would be different from the names on your list. That is a sign of the richness of God's goodness.

What does that holiness look like? The writer of 1 Peter lets us know: "Genuine love" (1 Peter 1:22). That love is marked by acts of piety and acts of mercy. Don't be scared off by the word "saint." As Hymn 712 in *The United Methodist Hymnal* says: "...and I mean, God helping, to be one too."

### What Someone Else Has Said:

Rebecca Manley Pippert (*Out of the Salt Shaker*, Intervarsity Press) wrote, "But God sees holiness lived out on the roads and streets of our daily lives...We may think of God's holiness as separation. But God sees his holiness lived out in our relationships."

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Lord, I sing 'Take time to be holy,' but I don't take the time; I sing 'Speak oft with thy Lord,' but I keep strangely silent; I sing 'Make friends of God's children,' but I pick those I want for friends..."

## November 8, 2009

**Text: 1 Peter 2:1-10**  
**"A Chosen People"**

The pickup truck had stopped in front of me, so when I came up behind it at the red light, I could easily read the bumper sticker: "Sorry, Officer, I thought you wanted to race."

We are pretty good at coming up with excuses to do what we want to do even when we know it is wrong. Often, we even do it when we are reading the Bible.

Take this week's study text, for example. The highlighted verse is 1 Peter 2:9.

If I stop reading after the phrase "God's own people," I get an entirely different meaning than I get if I read to the end of the verse. If I am "chosen," "royal," "holy," and "God's own," I must be pretty special, maybe even more special than others.

Well, there is this nasty use of the

plural "you" instead of the singular "you." Not just me? Oh, well, I guess that means that a few of us are special people: chosen, royal, holy, God's own. (Sorry about the rest of you.)

If I read no further, I get the clear impression that this status is one of privilege. As one who usually got picked last in sandlot choose-up-sides baseball games (I tended to swing before the ball got to home plate), I am delighted to receive finally the status, honor, and prestige of being chosen.

That is, if I read no more.

But note how the text is completed. We are chosen for a reason and none of it has to do with our being honored or privileged. *In order that!* We are chosen in order that we may proclaim the wonderful works of God. That's what it means to be a chosen, royal, holy, God's own people! It is to proclaim (NRSV), to declare (NIV), to tell forth (Emphasized NT), to make known (Weymouth), to tell others (Message), to show forth (Wesley Notes) what God has done to save us sinners, to bring us out of darkness into God's light.

Oh.

That changes things. Instead of being an invitation to privilege, the text is an invitation to responsibility.

We should have known better. Didn't God go through this once before when God had to rattle the cage of the Israelites who were beginning to think they were chosen because they so mighty and numerous (Deuteronomy 7:6-8)? It is never about how good we are; it is about how good God is. All the time.

### What Someone Else Has Said:

In the book *The Architecture of Ralph Adams Cram and His Office* (Norton), Ethan Anthony quotes Mr. Cram saying what many of us have felt: "It is a great game to be born active and sanguine, a fierce joy, but sometimes I wish there was a monastic order that took in (people like me). Now and then I get a little tired of responsibility."

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Did You call, Lord?..."

## November 15, 2009

**Text: 1 Peter 4:12-19**  
**"A Suffering People"**

This series of lessons from 1 Peter is going downhill fast. First, we

learned that the Church is a holy people (1 Peter 1:13). Last week, we studied that we are a chosen people, albeit chosen for responsibility (1 Peter 2:9).

Now comes the kicker. This week's study text invites us to see that we are "a suffering people." Is it too late to get off the boat?

In 1 Peter 4, the word translated "suffering" (*pathēma*) has its root in the word pathos. It carries with it the power of emotional, inner pain. It carries with it the hurt of disappointment or of broken promises. It carries with it the passion of strong feeling. This is not to deny or diminish the reality of physical pain, the anguish of abuse and torture, but it does help us understand that suffering occurs at many levels, some visible and obvious, some inside and not seen by others.

The advice from this epistle is to make sure that the suffering is in accordance with God's will (1 Peter 4:19). How has obedience to God's command brought on this suffering? How are the purposes of God lifted up in this suffering? What faithfulness to God is the context for this suffering? It is just possible that such suffering gives the believer the blessing of sharing in the sufferings of Christ (1 Peter 4:13).

These verses were written at a time when Emperor Trajan and Pliny the Younger, a regional governor, were exchanging correspondence about how to handle those Christians who weren't really causing any trouble except for refusing to deny Christ.

That is sort of the bottom line, isn't it? We do not set out to create problems, but an unwillingness to deny Christ can generate social troubles. Do we name social injustices or do we deny Christ? Do we love the unlovely or do we deny Christ? Do we speak against racism and sexism or do we deny Christ? Do we...well, you get the picture. And so do I.

For the Christian, perhaps the surprise should not be that the believer is suffering (1 Peter 4:12). Perhaps the real surprise ought to be when the believer is not suffering. Ouch.

### What Someone Else Has Said:

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (*Prisoner for God*, The Macmillan Company) wrote a letter in July 1944, about nine months before being hanged by the Nazis: "Christians range themselves

See "Bible Study," page 13

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# November adult Bible study *continued from page 12*

with God in his suffering; that is what distinguishes them from the heathen. As Jesus asked in Gethsemane, 'Could ye not watch with me one hour?' That is the exact opposite of what the religious man expects from God. Man is challenged to participate in the sufferings of God at the hands of a godless world."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Lord God, help me neither to seek nor run from suffering in Your name. Cast my journey in the shadow of the cross, so I can be watched over by the One who dies there, in order to live again with the One Who emptied the cross not of its suffering but of its power..."

## November 22, 2009

### Text: 2 Peter 1:3-15

#### "A Faithful People"

This lesson comes during the season of the American holiday of Thanksgiving. It is a time when we often focus on the gifts of health and family and freedom.

Truth to tell, Thanksgiving does not come easily for those whose health is weak, those whose families are broken, or those who are bound by addictions. The study text this week moves us to explore another gift: the gift of faith.

The writer of 2 Peter makes clear that faith is not something we bestow upon ourselves. "His divine power has given us everything needed for life and godliness..." (2 Peter 1:3). It is as Jesus said to Simon Peter when the disciple declared Jesus to be the Messiah: "...flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven" (Matthew 16:17).

In the Wesleyan tradition we acknowledge that justification is by faith, but it does not end there. As James said, "Faith without works is dead" (James 2:17).

Our text this week unfolds how faith can emerge with even greater gifts. The list begins in 2 Peter 1:5. To faith (trust in God in Jesus Christ), add goodness (act morally and right). To goodness, add knowledge (loving God with your best mind). To knowledge, add self-control (being disciplined in action and in thinking). To self-control, add endurance (patiently continuing in the journey). To endurance, add godliness (maintain respect for God). To godliness, add mutual affection (loving those close to you). To mutual affection, add love (the *agape* gift of unconditional love even of our enemies).

John Wesley had a term for the gift of full love of God and full love

of neighbor: Christian perfection (or entire sanctification).

2 Peter 1:3-15 guides us through the links among faith and works and holy living and love. It is a package deal! We short circuit God's intent for God's people if we consider the contract fulfilled with empty faith. Another way to say it is "God is as concerned with what we do on Monday as much as God is concerned with what we do on Sunday."

Look over that list in 2 Peter 1:5-7. Which of these gifts have been given to you? Which of these gifts has God tried to give to you and yet you resisted?

For the gifts you have (faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, endurance, godliness, mutual affection, love), give thanks. For the gifts not yet alive in your life, accept the grace of God that can open your heart to these blessings. And it just might be the best Thanksgiving ever.

## What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Francis Asbury* (Parthenon Press), L. C. Rudolph wrote, "Sanctification is the dying to sin and coming alive to righteousness which mark a mature Christian...Wesley believed that Christians must grow as long as they live..."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Thanks be to the God of creation, the God seen in Jesus Christ, the God who still lives among us, one God, blessed Trinity. Move our hearts from trust in You to trust in You and love for neighbor..."

## November 29, 2009

### Text: 2 Peter 3:1-13

#### "A Hopeful People"

This is the first Sunday of Advent, a time when the eyes of the Church begin to turn toward Christmas, celebrating the birth of Christ.

But the season of Advent also brings the Church's intentional look toward the return of Jesus. This week's study offers the hope that comes from expecting the triumphant final return of our Lord.

It is difficult for us to get inside these verses in 2 Peter because our situation is so different from the circumstance of those who first read these words. They were getting impatient with the fact that the promised return of Jesus had not occurred. After all, it had been at least two generations since that expectancy began.

We, on the other hand, give lip service to the teaching that Jesus will return, but, truth be told, we don't really think it is going to

happen anytime soon.

Occasionally, believers ignore the biblical word that no one knows when this return will be. When that happens, persons begin to try to read the signs of the times and make predictions (usually rather dire) that if Jesus is not returning tomorrow, at least He has booked a one-way flight before the prices go up.

So, what are we to make of these texts in 2 Peter? (1) We are not to ignore the promised return (2 Peter 3:7). (2) We are to remember that God does not keep time as we do (2 Peter 3:8). (3) We are to rejoice that God is patient (2 Peter 3:9). (4) We need not think that we can figure out the Lord's coming (2 Peter 3:10). (5) We find great hope in the fact that all this talk about "the day of God" is Bible-speak about the ultimate victory of God (2 Peter 3:13).

Are you the sort who reads the end of a novel before you plow through the earlier pages? Knowing how a story ends changes the way we read a story. That is the advice of the writer of 2 Peter. Knowing that God is going to create "new heavens and a new earth where righteousness is

at home" (2 Peter 3:13) changes the way we live in the midst of stress, uncertainty, setbacks, and travail. The writer says: "Read the end of the book!"

Confused? Take comfort in what John Wesley wrote about these verses: "How great a mystery!"

## What Someone Else Has Said:

James Mickey Efrid, for decades a Bible teacher at Duke Divinity School, has written (*Christ, the Church, and the End*, Judson Press): "Too many people when thinking about eschatology (last things) have emphasized only the aspects about the 'end,' but in the biblical accounts the emphasis is in reality upon a new beginning."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of yesterday and tomorrow, God Who makes good upon covenant promises, God Whose future is coming toward us, we live with the hope seen in the victory of Jesus Christ over death. Help us live as a people of hope, a people of victory..."

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## BIRTH

Howard and Laura (Wilmington District: Wrightsville associate) Mitchell announce the birth of a baby boy, Owen Alexander, born on Aug. 22.

## DEATH

THOMAS, Wayne (Greenville District: retired) died Aug. 19. A graveside service was held Aug. 22 in Washington, NC.

## CLASSIFIEDS

**TRINITY UNITED** Methodist Church in Elizabethtown, NC is seeking to fill a part-time Organist/Pianist position. Interested persons should send a resume to Trinity UMC, PO Box 759, Elizabethtown, NC 28337 or the trinityumc@embarqmail.com. Questions can be sent to bplatham1@intristar.net or call 910-862-3706.

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## Las Familias en Cristo gives back to community and races in support of breast cancer research

In late July, 50 volunteers and participants joined to raise money for the Komen Race for the Cure and breast cancer research.

The race was developed by families



of *Las Familias en Cristo*, a program supported by Millbrook UMC and Hayes Barton UMC, who wanted a way to give back to the community.

The participants decorated shirts, had preparation from a school nurse, and were ready to "go the distance" in their own community.

Erwin Lopez, Duke Divinity School intern, prepared the group by comparing granola bars to the Bread of Life, water to The Living Water, and the Race to the Race of Life!

Each lap of the race was counted by giving out straws to the runners. Yarn was held up for the winner to cross, and each runner received a medal on a ribbon.

At the end of the day, balloons were released symbolizing the hope and prayers that breast cancer will be defeated.



## Partnerships made Summer Enrichment Camp possible at Galilee UMC in Laurinburg

The Summer Enrichment Camp at Galilee United Methodist Church (located on McGirts Bridge Road in Laurinburg, in the Rockingham District) was an example of making partnerships work.

For the second year the camp partnered with the Summer Feeding Program. The feeding program provides breakfast and lunch for children during the summer. The 2009 camp at Galilee operated from June 15 - July 30.

This summer, Galilee developed other partnerships with the Scotland County Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Program. This program provided six youth paid by the WIA Summer Career Starts Program.

Another partnership was with the Department of Social Services. This agency provided five workers with the Work First Program.

The church reached out across denominational lines and partnered with Westminster Presbyterian Church. Westminster provided three volunteers. The other 22 volunteers were members of Galilee UMC. Thus, the summer camp had 32 volunteers and 135 children ages 4-16 years.

The campers started the day with breakfast. They were led in devotion and Bible study by the Dr. Jesse Brunson, pastor at Galilee. The students were assigned to one of six groups according to age and grade level. After Bible study, each group engaged in age-appropriate activity.

This year's camp academic emphasis was on writing skills. Students were led in activity that developed and enhanced their writing and communication skills.

Each day also included recreational activity. Galilee used the gym at the nearby I. E. Johnson Elementary School. The children enjoyed fun indoor activity in the middle of hot and humid summer days.

The school is Galilee's partner

school and also provides students for Bridge Builders After School at Galilee during the school year. Other children in Bridge Builders come from North Laurinburg Elementary School.

The camp also featured a teen forum led by the high school age staff. In the teen forum the middle and high school children were given the opportunity to talk about making the right choices in school, in the community, and among friends.

Worship activity was incorporated in this year's camp. Brunson gave inspirational remarks and the Focused Mime Ministry of Galilee participated. The mime ministry is made up of children ages 6-13 years.

The mime ministry was very popular with the children and helped them understand that older individuals are not the only persons to participate in worship.

Several guest speakers discussed their careers and how they reached their careers by making right choices. The speakers included Chef David Breeden of Clinton Inn Restaurant, Detectives Mark Godwin and Darwin Williams of the Laurinburg Police Department; Dr. Jonathan Rowson of Maxton Family Practice; and Luther Douglas, an attorney in Laurinburg.

Brunson and camp staff took some of the middle and high school students to Juvenile Court at the Scotland County Courthouse. Judge William C. McIlwain III, chief district court judge, District 16A, and his staff as well as one of the public defenders spoke to the students before the court cases were called.

They talked about juvenile court procedures with emphasis on making good choices to avoid being there. They answered questions from the camp students as well as from parents and youth there waiting for the start of court.



ABOVE: Kindergarten students and group leaders at Galilee UMC Summer Enrichment Camp.

BELOW: Teen forum participants listen to insights from the high school camp staff on making the right choices.



The closing program of the camp was held in the sanctuary of Galilee UMC. Motivational Speakers at closing included Brunson; Emma Stone, principal at I. E. Johnson Elementary; and Johnerlyn Johnson, principal of the ninth Grade Academy at Scotland High School. Focused Mime Ministry gave a closing performance.

The Summer Feeding Program ended with its Annual Banquet held at First UMC in Laurinburg on Aug. 22. This banquet brought together churches and organizations that made up 19 sites in Scotland County as Summer Feeding Program Sites.

Each year the program recognizes sites for their participation and work. The 2009 Site Manager of the Year Award was presented to Doris Hines Brunson, site manager for Galilee UMC. She has served as Summer Camp director at Galilee for two years. She is the wife of Galilee's pastor, Dr. Brunson.



# around the CONFERENCE



## Beauty Spot increases VBS attendance, holds food drive for Church & Community Center

Beauty Spot UMC, in the Rockingham District, recently completed a very successful 2009 Vacation Bible School. Evangelism and mission team leaders partnered with the education team and accepted challenges to increase VBS attendance with persons from the community. They also agreed to hold a canned food drive to assist the Robeson County Church and Community with stocking their pantry with food for the needy.

Both challenges exceeded their expectation, yielding the largest attendance in recent memory and bringing in 205 food items with 100% participation from the VBS enrollment. Mrs. Gertrude P. Johnson directed the activity. Dr. Jimmy F. Cummings is the pastor.

## Jefferson holds back-to-school event, offers tutoring throughout the year



On Aug. 22, Pastor Doug Johnson led Jefferson UMC in a Back-to-School event for community residents. Despite a heavy thunderstorm, over 1,000 persons received a prayer for the new school year, a New Testament, and an encouraging word of God's love. The people at Jefferson offered a street-fair type of atmosphere with hot dogs, soda and bounce houses. They also are offering ongoing tutoring throughout the year, and one year's free school supplies for any student making straight A's.

Jefferson UMC is located adjacent to Jefferson Park, the public housing project in Goldsboro. Church members and other area pastors participated. Pictured are the Rev. Bill Creech of St. Joseph UMC (red shirt) and the Rev. Linda Grider of Woodland-Pink Hill UMC (yellow shirt). Also participating were the Rev. Alice Davis who is chaplain at Louisburg College, the Rev. Shirley Ward of Brogden UMC and Chuck Cook (Goldsboro District superintendent) shared the joy of offering bags of school supplies and prayers with the students and their parents who attended the Back-to-School Event.



## "Free Market" at Bethel in Snow Camp

Bethel UMC in Snow Camp (Burlington District) participated in a "Free Market" with their local elementary school to assist with students returning to school. They connected with families before the start of school and provided school supplies, groceries, toiletries, and clothes.

Fifty-five persons from 17 families participated and 45 volunteers provided assistance. Pictured are some of the church volunteers standing behind items available during the market.



## Children's health a focus at Pleasant Green UMC

This summer, Pleasant Green UMC in Durham offered elementary-age children a Heart Healthy living program. "Young Hearts for God" highlighted Psalms, Old and New Testament Bible texts, plus excerpts from the writings of John Wesley illustrating heart healthy attitudes and behaviors. Each week, participants learned about how the heart works (what makes it tick – literally) and the nutrition, exercise, stress-reducing, and faith actions that help keep our hearts working smoothly as God intended.

Scripture and health background was enhanced with hands-on learning activities, games, and snack-making projects. Each child took home their own hand-decorated journal containing basic heart health information, notes they made about their exercise, eating habits, favorite sports and foods, as well as, easy-to-follow recipes for the snacks prepared at camp.

As part of the ongoing health programs, the height, weight, and blood pressure of children is measured twice a year. From data collected in July, 75% of Pleasant Green children had a healthy weight compared to 62% across North Carolina and 22% of the children were overweight or obese compared with 30% for the state.

"Young Hearts for God" was developed by the Rev. Eileen Bisgrove, who has a Ph.D. in Public Health Nutrition. A "Young Hearts" curriculum will be published for summer 2010. Learn more and read about the already published "Growing Green"© environmental health curriculum at [www.walkingwithjesus.info](http://www.walkingwithjesus.info).





Former residents of Methodist Orphanage and other friends of the orphanage and Methodist Home for Children stand in front of the historic marker following the marker's unveiling. (Photo by LeAnn Stamper)

## Historical marker placed at Methodist Orphanage's original campus entrance

By Melissa Nordan \*

On Saturday, Sept. 12, Methodist Home for Children (MHC) and the city of Raleigh came together to celebrate over 100 years of service to children and families at an unveiling of a state highway historical marker on the grounds of the original Methodist Orphanage (MO).

The marker recognizes MO as one of the state's oldest orphanages, noting its founding in 1899 to care for young people from 56 counties in central and eastern North Carolina.

The Raleigh campus served as a home for more than 2,700 children before transitioning, between 1979 and 1984, to a community-based family and child service agency.

In 1955, the name of Methodist Orphanage was changed to Methodist Home for Children (MHC).

With the support of the Raleigh Parks and Recreation Department, the marker was placed at the corner of Glenwood Avenue and Washington Street, just inside the boundary of Fred Fletcher Park. This spot actually marks the entrance to what used to be the original main driveway into the 64-acre MO campus.

"This location—the 'foot of the hill' for those of us who lived at the orphanage—is a perfect spot to honor the institution that served so many children for so many years," said Billy Griffin, president of the MO/MHC Alumni Association. "We are so proud to have this marker installed," he said.

The event was attended by alumni family members, staff and MHC board members, local media, NC Office of Archives and History staff, the Raleigh Parks and Recreation Department, and other well wishers.

Still very much in business today, MHC is recognized as one of North Carolina's most distinguished child and family service agencies. This state-wide nonprofit provides residential group homes, foster care, adoption services, in-home family counseling, early childhood services, and consultation to more than 1,400 children and families each year.

\* Melissa Nordan is a communications specialist at Methodist Home for Children.

Engage. Enrich. Empower.



## Methodist University Presents... *Ride! Ride! A Musical on the Life of John Wesley*

**When:** November 19-21 at 7:30 p.m. & Sunday, November 22 at 4:00 p.m.

**Where:** Reeves Auditorium

**Cost:** \$10 for general admission

\$5 for seniors, military, students with valid ID, and groups of five or more.

### November 21: Wesley Workshop

- 9:30 a.m. Coffee Time
  - 9:50 Welcome
  - 10-11:30 Seminar I: "John Wesley: A Life Committed to Social Justice" Dr. Mark Wethington
  - 1-2:30 Seminar II: "Charles Wesley and a New Era for Congregational Singing" Dr. Stan McDaniel
  - 3-4:30 Seminar III: "The Ten Things You will Love about John Wesley" and "Will the Real John Wesley Please Stand Up?" Dr. Kenneth Collins.
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— North Carolina Conference  
Mission Statement

**10 Mission and Service Commitments**

North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church



## Friends,

It is an exciting thing to be a part of the Church! It is an exciting thing to belong to God's family! It is an exciting thing to be heirs of the Kingdom! And, to be given a responsible place of work in the Lord's vineyard!

That's who we are! And, that's what we do! Other things in life have value but nothing compares to the importance of who we are in Christ and what we do for the Lord. In fact, the more fully we live into the "who" and the "what", the more fully we appreciate the other things we value!

So, may we all give thanks for our connection as United Methodists in the North Carolina Annual Conference since the mission of our conference is to help us with the "who" and the "what" – making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world! That's our priority and our focus!

Every year for the last number of years we have been adjusting our budget more and more into alignment with this mission.

Every year for the last number of years we have been evaluating more fully how every dollar is being spent and how that dollar relates to the "who" and "what".

I am pleased with the wonderful process we have made in being responsible and good stewards of every dollar entrusted to

us for the Lord's work and mission.

This booklet is intended to help you "see" the many parts of how we are living into the mission of making disciples and assisting God in the transformation of the world.

We want you to see this is mission and ministry not "corporate tax" or "franchise tax"! This is how we serve the Lord together! These are ways we have chosen together to make new disciples, nurture growing disciples and care for older disciples!

Please study this booklet carefully so that you might become a knowledgeable interpreter to other members of your congregation. Help them to "see" that this connectional giving is about mission – it's about living into the "who" and "what"! It's about pleasing the Father by making disciples of Jesus for the transformation of the world! It's about our commitment to Christ and His Church!

Pray over this booklet and ask God to use every dollar for His glory. And, should you have questions please ask them so that we might more fully communicate how we are in ministry together!



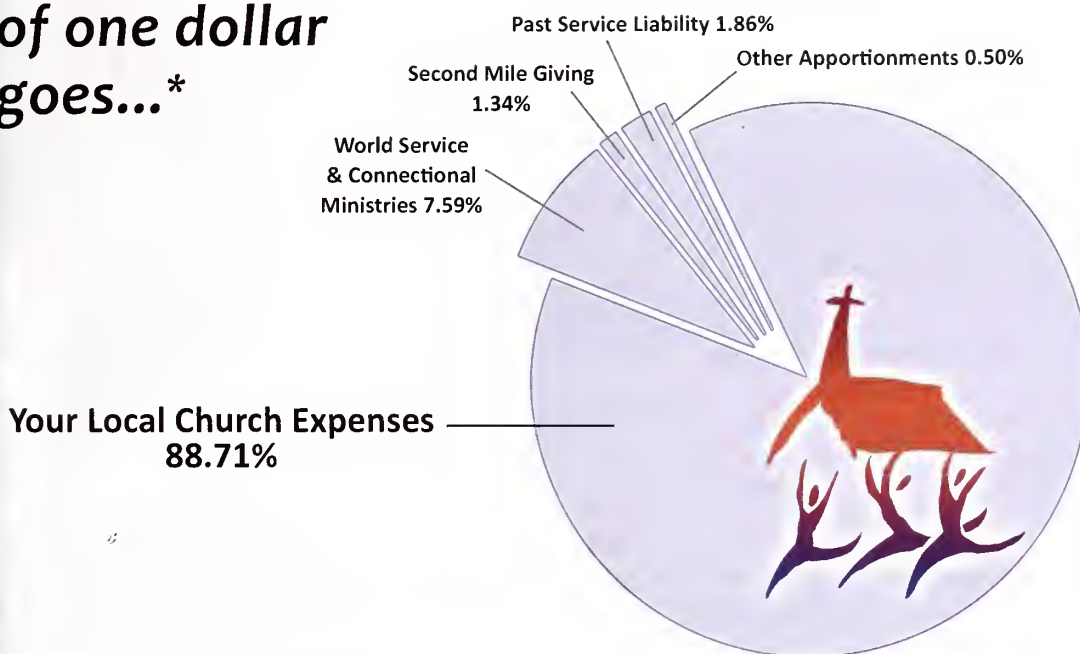
A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Al Gwinn". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Bishop Al Gwinn  
North Carolina Annual Conference  
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## Look at where your Gift of one dollar goes...\*



**88.71% of every dollar you give stays in your local church and is spent as follows:**

- 42.33% Local Church Programs, Operating Expenses, and Benevolences:**  
These funds are expended for operational needs such as utilities, building maintenance, salaries and benefits, office supplies, local programs such as Sunday Schools and youth activities, and local benevolences.
- 25.66% Local Pastor(s) Salaries and Benefits:**  
This item reflects the compensation paid to the local church's pastor or pastors in the form of salary, travel, utilities, and continuing education allowances. It also represents the church's portion of pension payments on behalf of its pastor(s) and supplemental benefits for items such as hospitalization and life insurance.
- 20.72% Local Building and Debt Retirement:**  
This represents capital improvements, mortgages, and debt retirements related to local church buildings and property. Building programs and other capital investments unique to each church are not included in calculating conference apportionments.

\* Based on grand total of all expenditures as reported on the 2008 Table II.



# The Apportionment Formula

The apportionment formula is approved by each Annual Conference session and is based on how a church spends money.

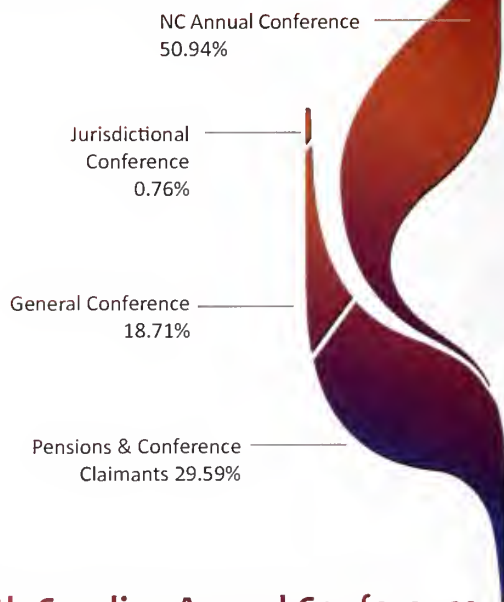
The base amount of local church expenses is calculated by adding up all expenditures reported on Table II and then subtracting exclusions (as listed below).

Each church's base is then compared to the total of all base amounts for all other churches and the budget approved at the last Annual Conference is distributed to each church using the same ratio.

Unadjusted apportionments will not increase more than 15% from the previous year.

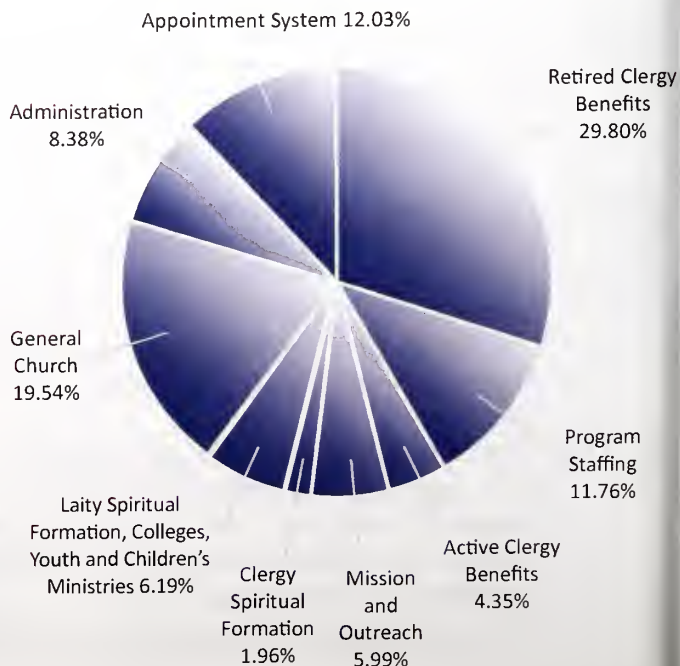
The exclusions are: Payments on World Service and Connectional Ministries, Past Service Liability-Pensions, Episcopal Fund and all other apportionments; district work fund; principal and interest on indebtedness; buildings and improvements; 50% of property insurance; local benevolences paid directly by the church; General and Conference Advance Specials; Ten Dollar Club; up to \$4,500 for travel paid by a charge for each pastor; United Methodist Student Day; Human Relations Day; Peace with Justice Sunday; Native American Awareness Sunday; One Great Hour of Sharing; World Communion Sunday; UMW Funds sent to district and conference treasurer; housing allowance paid in lieu of furnished parsonage to a minister serving under Episcopal appointment in a charge of the conference; offerings taken for disasters as designated by the Disaster Response Committee and the Resident Bishop.

## 2011 North Carolina Annual Conference Budget To Be Raised in 2010



## North Carolina Annual Conference 2010 Budget Distribution

In 2008, 819 churches in the NC Conference, with a total membership of 237,490, spent \$170,145,762 for all causes. This translates to \$716.43 per member. Based on these disbursements, the 2010 Budget (which is funded by 2009 apportionments) is as follows:





# NC Annual Conference Mission & Service Needs

## To Be Raised in 2010 for 2011

### Totals by Conference

	Approved Amount	% of Total Apportionments	Increase/ Decrease of Budget from Previous Year
Total General Conference	\$ 3,794,202	18.71%	0.33%
Total Jurisdictional Conference	\$ 153,388	0.76%	0.00%
Total Pensions & Conference Claimants	\$ 6,000,000	29.59%	0.00%
Total Annual Conference	\$10,328,609	50.94%	6.97%
GRAND TOTAL ALL FUNDS	\$ 20,276,199	100.00%	3.50%

### Totals by Program or Ministry Area

	Approved Amount	% of Total Apportionments	Increase/ Decrease of Budget from Previous Year
** World Service and NC Conference Connectional Ministries			
World Service	\$ 1,976,647	9.75%	0.60%
NCC Connectional Ministries	\$ 14,072,829	69.41%	4.97%
**Past Service Liability-Pensions	\$ 3,300,000	16.28%	0.00%
**Episcopal Fund	\$ 543,697	2.68%	1.87%
**Africa University Fund	\$ 60,416	0.30%	-0.43%
**Black College Fund	\$ 269,946	1.33%	-0.43%
**Interdenominational Cooperation Fund	\$ 52,664	0.26%	-0.56%
GRAND TOTAL ALL FUNDS	\$ 20,276,199	100.00%	3.50%

**Further details on the Program and Ministry areas  
are available on pages 6-11.**

\*\* Within the NC Conference, budget funds are raised one year and spent the next. Items with asterisks are spent the same year raised.



# Mission & Service Commitments for 2011

## World Service and NC Conference Connectional Ministries

### World Service \*\*

The World Service Fund is the basic benevolence fund of the Church, designated in the *Book of Discipline* as "the first benevolent responsibility of the Church" (paragraph 812).

Receipts are distributed to the general program agencies and other benevolent causes by a precise formula.

These agencies resource local churches and extended local church mission nationally and internationally.

The World Service Fund allows United Methodists to participate in meaningful ways in God's mission throughout the world.

**Total:..... \$1,976,647**



### North Carolina Conference Connectional Ministries

**Outreach Ministry Team** — *Serves to carry forth ministry that transforms the world*

#### Criminal Justice

**& Mercy Ministries ..... \$11,400**  
Development and coordination of ministries in jails and prisons and advocacy for prison reform.

**DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministries \$30,000**  
Carries DISCIPLE Bible Study into our state's prisons and smaller churches.

**Disaster Response ..... \$16,200**  
Provides organization, training, oversight of United Methodist disaster response.

**Methodist Home of Children ..... \$190,000**  
Provides assistance for operating expenses and benevolent care.

**Methodist Retirement Homes ..... \$200,000**  
Provides assistance for operating expenses and benevolent care.

**Golden Cross Fund ..... \$15,050**  
Assists in payment of hospital bills, physicians, medicine and other medical expenses for laypersons with special needs.

**Missions and Outreach ..... \$492,220**  
Provides salary support for Church and Community workers. Funds mission projects, rural and urban ministries, assists minority churches, administers building loans and grants to local churches, and interprets missions programs.





**Ethnic young adults address social justice advocacy through a General Board of Church and Society internship program supported by giving to the World Service Fund.**

## **Board of Institutions.....\$500**

Reviews and supports the conference relationship with institutions to whom the conference is related "by faith": camps, Methodist Home for Children, Asbury Homes, Methodist Retirement Homes, UM Foundation, and the colleges.

## **Disability Concerns.....\$4,700**

Task force created to support the Commission on Disability Concerns.

## **Refugee and Immigration .....\$11,000**

Assists with refugee resettlement and interpretation of immigration policy.

## **Leadership Team — Serves to equip leaders who implement the Vision**

## **Multicultural Ministries ..... \$18,450**

Strengthening local churches in reaching out to racial ethnic people and building bridges among races.

## **Comprehensive Plan**

### **of Inclusiveness Grants .....\$50,000**

Provides grants for ministries of inclusiveness in districts and local churches.

## **Comprehensive Plan**

### **of Inclusiveness Programs..... \$112,620**

Provides program funds for conference ministries of inclusiveness.

## **Hispanic/Latino Ministries Office.....\$12,700**

Program funds for this burgeoning ministry.

## **Monitoring and Accountability.....\$3,700**

Monitors for inclusiveness in regard to

gender, ethnicity, age, and handicapping conditions.

## **\*\* Ministerial Education Fund ..... \$676,660**

Assists in the education and training of clergy and diaconal ministers in our conference.

## **Board of Ordained/**

### **Diaconal Ministry..... \$190,700**

Funds enlistment, preparation, examination, continuing education and career development for persons serving in ordained ministry and continues relationships with diaconal ministers.

## **Board of Ordained Ministry:**

### **Sexual Ethics Program .....\$21,875**

Funds one position to provide training or clergy and churches regarding sexual ethics.

## **Seminary Visitation.....\$2,000**

Assists in maintaining contact with clergy candidates and in sharing opportunities available in the ordained ministry in our conference.

## **Bishop's Days Apart ..... \$8,000**

Bishop's program for renewal of clergy leadership.

## **Laity ..... \$28,000**

Promotes training for laypersons serving as leaders in the church and community; leadership training workshops, district and conference rallies, and programs.

## **Committee on Episcopacy..... \$1,200**

Serves as support and advisory group on matters related to episcopal leadership.

## **Office of the Bishop ..... \$31,000**

Operations supplement to monies received from the Episcopal Fund.

## **District Superintendents Fund**

### **Salaries and Benefits ..... \$1,549,470**

### **Travel.....\$104,000**

### **Cabinet Meeting-**

### **Related Expenses..... \$40,000**

## **Cabinet Discretionary Fund.....\$5,000**

## **Bishop's Discretionary Fund .....\$2,000**



Funds for use by bishop for emergencies or other needs not funded.

## Director of Ministerial Relations

**Salaries and Benefits .....\$343,459**  
Salaries and benefits for three persons.

**Office..... \$24,000**  
Office expenses, travel, telephone.

**Christian Unity .....\$7,000**  
Interprets, advocates, and works for the unity of the Christian Church, encourages dialogue and cooperation.

**NC Council of Churches..... \$18,000**  
Promotes Christian Unity, interfaith dialogue and cooperation, and advocates for social justice in our State Legislature.

**Effective Ministry Program.....\$25,000**  
Provides assistance for pastors' salaries during medical or other urgent conditions and transition.

**NCC Staff Relations Committee .....\$1,300**  
Supports meeting expenses of the personnel committee for the conference staff.

**Nominations .....\$500**  
Supports meeting expenses of Nominations Committee.

## **Christian Formation Team —** *Serves to form & nurture disciples of Jesus Christ*

**Evangelism.....\$99,955**  
Promotes evangelism programs and ministries. Provides training and resources to local churches and districts.

**Church & Society ..... \$12,600**  
Relates the gospel of Jesus Christ to people and to the structures of the communities, nation and world in which they live, and develops programs which provide education and action on issues confronting the Church consistent with the Social Principles and the policies adopted by the General Conference.

**Spiritual Life..... \$12,800**  
Provides opportunities for persons to grow

in faith through spiritual disciplines.

**Worship .....\$5,200**  
Designs worship for Annual Conference events, and offers worship training for local congregations.

**Higher Education  
and Campus Ministry.....\$7,000**  
Provides support for campus ministries, administers scholarships, connects colleges and the local church.

**College Chaplaincy Support .....\$275,000**  
Assists Louisburg College, Methodist University, N.C. Wesleyan College, Duke Divinity School, High Point University, Greensboro College and Bennett College.

**College Chaplaincy Support -Reserve ...\$68,750**  
Provides reserve for transitioning College Chaplaincy Support budget line to be raised in advance.

**Campus Ministry ..... \$501,400**  
Supports United Methodist ministry on campuses in the NC Conference through Wesley Foundations and Fellowships, and ecumenical campus ministries.

**Young Adults .....\$4,050**  
Supports meetings and work of Young Adult Ministries Council, resources for local church young adult ministry, financial assistance for those attending Church-related young adult ministry offerings.



Fan the Flame workshops share the love of Christ and Christian Formation tools with small membership churches in the conference.





**Youth attending the annual NCC Confirmation Celebration package meals for STOP Hunger Now.**

## **Youth Ministry .....\$60,300**

Supports meetings and work of Council on Youth Ministries including seed money for youth events such as Global Vision, Kaleidoscope, Rally Day, Summer Breakaway, Appalachian Trail Hike, Annual Conference Session for Youth, and Pilgrimage.

## **Children's Ministries ..... \$19,450**

Supports meetings and programs of Children's Ministry Team including curriculum resource team, scholarships, continuing education events, and workshops. Also funds Conference Safe Sanctuaries Committee meetings, resources, and training events.

## **Older Adult Ministry .....\$ 6,000**

Supports programs and training by providing resources and information about the needs and issues concerning aging.

## **NCCUM Camp & Retreat**

### **Ministries, Inc. ....\$275,000**

Provides funding to support the administrative oversight of Chestnut Ridge, Don Lee, and Rockfish Camp and Retreat Centers.

## **Education and Nurture ..... \$3,200**

Strengthens and develops local church ministries of Christian nurture.

## **Emerging Church Support..... \$823,419**

Provides salaries, housing, and benefits for pastors of new churches and administration of the Office of Congregational Development.

## **Office of Congregational Development**

### **Salaries and Benefits ..... \$226,578**

Salaries/benefits for two staff.

### **Office Expenses.....\$63,000**

Office expenses and travel.

## **Archives & History..... \$7,650**

Funds meeting expenses for commission, maintains records and history of conference.

## **Conference Media Center .....\$6,300**

Provides ongoing support for operations in the conference Media Center.

## **Stewardship Team —**

*Serves to empower ministry*

## **Stewardship.....\$13,250**

Interprets stewardship theologically and promotes stewardship education and programs.

## **Annual Conference Expense ..... \$178,000**

Housing, food, and other expenses for the Annual Conference session of over 2,300 members (lay and clergy).

## **Annual Conference Registrar**

### **Salary & Benefits..... \$4,000**

## **Conference Secretary's Office**

### **Salaries and Benefits ..... \$91,080**

Provides for full-time clerical assistance, a stipend for the conference secretary.

### **Office..... \$18,500**

All office expenses.

## **Conference Journal/Printing..... \$40,000**

Provides for the cost of producing the Conference Journal, directory, and Book of Recommendations.

## **Communications ..... \$90,000**

Resources for interpretive materials such as this publication, news releases and media relations, Igniting Ministry, production of Saddlebag at Annual Conference, Media Center mailings and support, and electronic equipment purchase and maintenance, web server and email communication, video streaming, and web site nccumc.org.

## **Publications: NC Conference**

### **Christian Advocate ..... \$57,700**

Provides a subscription for every North Carolina conference pastor and widow/er and additional support for the newspaper





**Pilgrimage, an annual gathering, regularly reaches over 6,000 youth representing all 12 districts in the NC Conference and beyond.**

which is published by the NC Conference.

## **\*\*General Administration ..... \$214,172**

The General Conference, World Methodist Council, Judicial Council, General Commission on Archives & History, and in part, the General Council on Finance and Administration, the Board of Pensions, and special litigation costs.

## **\*\*SEJ Mission & Ministry .....\$153,388**

Supports a cooperative ministry to United Methodists in the Southeast including SEJ Jurisdictional Conference, Lake Junaluska, and Jurisdictional Council expenses.

## **Conference Treasurer's Office**

### **Salaries and Benefits .....\$673,105**

Provides funding for a ministry and support staff of ten full or part-time staff, their salaries, health and life insurance, pension, Social Security, and other benefit costs.

### **Office..... \$217,860**

Operating expenses of conference treasurer's office and statistician, including annual audit.

## **Treasurer Bonding & Insurance ..... \$10,790**

A conference-held bond covering designated financial officers in the local church.

## **Information Management**

### **Salaries and Benefits .....\$202,899**

Provides funding for a ministry and support staff of three full or part-time staff, their salaries, health and life insurance, pension, Social Security, and other benefit costs.

### **Office.....\$74,300**

Provides funding for the management and

maintenance of the conference information technology infrastructure, including computer hardware, software, and network administration.

## **Conference Board of Trustees .....\$1,750**

Funds meetings and work of this board.

## **Contingency Fund ..... \$15,000**

Provides for unanticipated needs; administered by the Conference Council on Finance and Administration.

## **\*\*Methodist Building**

### **Operating Fund ..... \$175,000**

## **\*\*Methodist Building**

### **Capital Fund..... \$200,000**

## **Episcopal Residence..... \$15,000**

Maintenance supplement to monies received from the Episcopal Fund.

## **Staff Housing .....\$110,671**

Provides housing for four clergy positions of the Annual Conference.

## **Legal Counsel..... \$20,000**

Provides for conference legal expenses not funded by a particular board or agency.

## **Committee on Equitable**

### **Compensation ..... \$125,000**

Supplements salaries of eligible clergy to the base salary level determined by Annual Conference.

## **Minister's Moving Expense..... \$185,000**

Assists in the moving expenses of pastors.



**NC Annual Conference gatherings offer clergy and laity the opportunity to speak and vote on a variety of topics related to the Church.**





An Africa University musical ensemble performs.

**Joint Committee on Incapacity ..... \$461,058**

Assists clergy who temporarily cannot serve due to incapacity.

**Conference Claimants -**

**Retiree Insurance..... \$2,700,000**  
Supports health insurance for our retired clergy and dependents of deceased clergy.

**Incoming WATS Line.....\$4,200**  
Funding for toll-free WATS line calls to the United Methodist Building in Raleigh from within the state of North Carolina.

**General & Jurisdictional**

**Conferences .....\$30,000**  
Expenses for General and Jurisdictional Conferences and funding for electronic balloting costs.

**Conference Connectional Ministries**

**Staff Salaries and Benefits.....\$1,145,000**  
Represents a ministry and support staff of 12 persons, their salaries, hospitalization insurance, lay staff pensions, Social Security, travel, etc.

**Office, Meetings, and Programs .....\$120,250**

**Total NCC Connectional Ministries ..... \$14,072,829**

**Total World Service and NC Conference Connectional Ministries:**  
**\$ 16,049,476**

**Past Service Liability \*\***

Past Service Liability-Pensions applies toward the unfunded (pre-1982) pension liability for pastors.

**Total ..... \$3,300,000**

**Africa University \*\***

The development of a United Methodist university in Zimbabwe. This university provides theological and other educational programs on the continent where United Methodism is experiencing its fastest growth.

**Total ..... \$60,416**

**Black College Fund \*\***

This fund supplements operational and capital needs of 10 black colleges, including Bennett College in Greensboro and one medical school, which have provided leadership to the church and nation.

**Total ..... \$269,946**

**Episcopal Fund \*\***

Covers salaries and expenses of active United Methodist bishops and dependents, retired bishops and surviving spouses.

**Total ..... \$543,697**

**Interdenominational Cooperation Fund \*\***

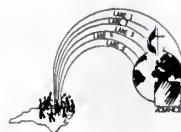
Supports those general church activities which are ecumenical in nature. This is United Methodism in mission with other Christian communities witnessing in the world.

**Total ..... \$52,664**

**Grand Total all funds:**  
**\$20,276,199**



# 2010 Rainbow Covenant Advance Specials



**Lane 1: World Missions**

**Lane 2: National Missions**

**Lane 3: Missionary Salary Support**

**Lane 4: UMCOR**

**Lane 5: Conference Advances**

After your church has gone the first mile by paying its apportionments in full (World Service & Con-  
nectional Ministries, Episcopal Fund, Interdenomina-  
tional Cooperation, Black Colleges, Africa University  
Fund and Past Service Liability), then select at least  
one Advance Special from each lane. The six Special  
Sundays are not included. Send your contributions  
to each of these Advance Specials through the NCC  
Treasurer. In order for your congregation to receive  
the Rainbow Covenant certificate and recognition,

please complete the Rainbow Covenant Report  
Form located on page 20 of this booklet. This form  
is due to your District Missions Secretary by January  
31, 2010. Rainbow Covenant recognition is normally  
a part of the District Lay Rallies.

## Lane One: World Missions

### 1. LOVE FOR LIBERIA FUND:

A two-year focus of missional action, prayer, and  
giving for United Methodist ministries in Liberia.  
Gifts can be given to the following:

General Love for Liberia Fund .....#S-00221

Work Team Support ..... #S-00222

Provision of School Books ..... #S-00223

Bibles for Children and Students ..... #S-00224

Laptop/Computer Ministry ..... #S-000225

Scholarships for College ..... #S-00226

Scholarships for Seminary .....#S-00227

Scholarships for  
Primary Education ..... #S-00228

Purchase of Tractors  
for Mission Stations ..... #S-00229

Provision of Medications ..... #S-00230

Funds for shipping ..... #S-00231

Support Agricultural  
Self Sustainability ..... #S-00232

Purchase of Tools .....#S-00233

Provision of Building Materials ..... #S-00234

Food Provision Ministry  
for Children .....#S-00235

Purchase of Skills  
Development Supplies..... #S-00236

Provision of Fuel for Generators.....#S-00237

Vehicles for Pastors/DSs/  
Mission Workers ..... #S-00238

Ganta United Methodist  
Mission Station.....#14369T

Funds received will support rebuilding mission  
station buildings and infrastructure destroyed  
in the war.

#### Brighter Future Children's

Rescue Center ..... #3020790

Funds received will support Ex-Combatants, Vo-  
cational /Literacy Training and Feeding .

Feed My Lambs.....#S-00179

Funds received will support Street Children, and  
Feeding/Literacy training.

#### Sustainable Agriculture

and Development.....#982188

Funds support technologically appropriate prac-  
tices and Farmer Field Schools coordinated by  
missionary Mozart Adevu.

### 2. PROJECT AGAPE, Armenia.... #S-00004

Relief efforts in Armenia (food, medical sup-  
plies, medication) working with the Armenian  
Church to provide a holistic ministry in pastoral  
care, education, healthcare, agriculture and eco-  
nomic development.

### 3. PERU COVENANT TEAM:

Funds received for this project will be adminis-  
tered by the NC Conference Peru Team to fulfill  
the covenant made between our Conference  
and the Methodist Church in Peru. Funds may  
be designated for the following:

General Fund ..... #S-00053

Breakfast of Love ..... #S-00111

Matched Churches .....#S-00112

Building and Work Teams .....#S-00113

Medical Needs ..... #S-00114



National Plan for Evangelism .....	#S-00115
Christian Education-all ages .....	#S-00116
Children and Youth .....	#S-00117
Theological Education & Pastoral Formation- Obras de Wesley .....	#S-00118
Women's Programs .....	#S-00119
Leadership Development .....	#S-00120
Mission Teams .....	#S-00121
White Plains/North Lima .....	#S-00173

4. **CURAMERICAS/ANDEAN RURAL HEALTH CARE PROGRAM, Bolivia** ..... #10158A  
Provides vaccinations, nutritional monitoring of children, prenatal care, and other preventative health care services. Funds are divided 42% for the Methodist Church of Bolivia and 58% for Curamericas/Andean Rural Health Care.
5. **AMITY FOUNDATION, TEACHERS, Nanjing, China** ..... #09801A  
Teacher Support.
6. **AMITY PRINTING PRESS BIBLES, Nanjing, China** ..... #11422A  
The Amity Printing Press TAPP was established in 1987 as a joint venture between The Amity Foundation and United Bible Societies. Gifts help to print Bibles, hymnals and devotional materials in Chinese and minority languages.
7. **RUSSIA UNITED METHODIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY (Not Capital Campaign)** ..... #12174A  
Scholarships will provide good Biblical and theological training for the development of strong ministries for future Russian church leaders.
8. **SUDAN EMERGENCY – Africa, Sudan** ..... #184385  
Assisting the country through emergency and long-term development projects.
9. **SUDAN SHALOM MINISTRY – Africa, Sudan** ..... #3020787  
Supporting children orphaned by the war and HIV/AIDS.
10. **ANIMAL LIVESTOCK AND BEEKEEPING - Africa, Sudan** ..... #3020638  
Training farmers in animal husbandry and beekeeping to improve the community's economy.

Any other WORLD ADVANCE SPECIAL as listed in PARTNERSHIP IN MISSIONS.  
<http://new.gbgbm-umc.org/advance/projects/search>

## Lane Two: National Missions

1. **ROCKINGHAM DISTRICT NATIVE AMERICAN COOPERATIVE MINISTRIES - "EVERY MEMBER IN MINISTRY", Pembroke, NC** ..... #791001  
Provides ministry support, collaboration among our fourteen 14 Native American United Methodist Churches, leadership development, gifts exploration and missional opportunities
2. **ROBESON COUNTY CHURCH & COMMUNITY CENTER, Lumberton, NC** ..... #791742  
An ecumenical ministry in a multicultural community designed to help local churches meet emergency needs, literacy tutoring for children and adults, home repairs and building new homes. Speakers are available upon request.
3. **NATIONAL HISPANIC MINISTRIES CHALLENGE FUND** ..... #982620  
Provides assistance to Annual Conferences developing Hispanic Ministries, especially in the areas of leadership recruitment and development, financial resources and printed resources.
4. **SOCIETY OF ST. ANDREW POTATO PROJECT, Virginia** ..... #801600  
Salvages millions of pounds of unmarketable potatoes and other produce and distributes the food to hungry people nationwide.
5. **HINTON RURAL LIFE CENTER, Hayesville, NC** ..... #731372  
Provides for training needs and development of churches in town and rural settings.
6. **NATIVE AMERICAN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN** ..... #982615  
Supports leadership development, new church starts, and discipleship formation in the Native American community.



7. **SEJ ASSOCIATION OF NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES, Lake Junaluska, NC .....#791842**  
To help meet the needs of 130,000+ Native Americans living in the 17 annual conferences of the Southeast.

8. **RED BIRD MISSIONARY CONFERENCE, Beverly, Kentucky .....#773978**  
The conference program facilitates the development of local churches and local lay leaders in isolated rural mountain communities.

Any other **NATIONAL ADVANCE SPECIAL** listed in **PARTNERSHIP IN MISSIONS**.

## Lane Three: Missionary Salary Support

The following persons are recommended by the NCC Missions Development Team for Salary Support:

- + **MOZART ADEVU .....#13996Z**  
(Eastern Africa) Mozart is a GBGM missionary serving as the Africa Regional Coordinator for the sustainable Agriculture and Development Program for UMCOR. Substantial focus in work in farmers training in Liberia.
- + **WIL BAILEY .....#S-00140**  
(San Isidro, Costa Rica) Will is a SEJ/Conference Missionary responsible for working with local pastors in the southern zone of Costa Rica and organizes the projects at the Methodist churches in that area for U.S. work teams. He also teaches Theology, Bible and English at the extension campus of the Methodist seminary in San Isidro.
- + **LYNN & SHARON FOGLEMAN ...#773720**  
(Kentucky) Dr. Lynn and Dr. Sharon Fogleman are Associates in Mission Service missionaries serving with the General Board of Global Ministries at the Red Bird Clinic in Beverly, Kentucky.
- + **SHANA HARRISON .....#13089Z**  
(Chile) Shana is assigned as a chaplain of Colegio Psicopedagógico Juan Wesley in Santiago, Chile encouraging persons with disabilities to explore, express and nurture their spirituality.

- + **BUTCH HUFFMAN .....#S-00192**  
(NC Conference Missionary) Butch is engaging, encouraging, resourcing congregations for mission work team participation. He works with churches to equip them with the "how-to's" of doing local and foreign mission work teams. He can provide guidance or can lead the team if necessary.
- + **GREG JENKS.....#S-00148**  
(Sub-Sahara, Africa) An NC Conference Missionary Greg directs ZOE Ministry and is serving in the Zimbabwe Conference, Rwanda, and other areas of sub-Sahara Africa developing a comprehensive ministry in response to the AIDS pandemic. The primary focus is in the care of HIV orphans. The foci include establishing children's empowerment ministries, feeding programs, providing school fees and uniforms, and meeting spiritual needs of the children.
- + **ALEXANDRIA JONES.....#3020818**  
(National Farm Workers Ministry) As a NC Church and Community Worker, Alex advocates for just treatment and working conditions for farm workers. She educates congregations on farm worker issues and raises awareness for ministries of mercy and compassion for farm workers and their families.
- + **SHIRLEY TOWNSEND JONES ...#982995**  
(Bennettsville-Cheraw, SC) A Church and Community Worker, Shirley is assigned to the Bennettsville-Cheraw Area Cooperative Ministry in the SC Conference. She coordinates and implements spiritual, educational, social and economical programs for the 13 member churches and communities.
- + **FRIDO KINKOLENGE .....#15152Z**  
(Liberia) A Methodist originally from the Congo, Frido has been working with the people of Liberia since 2004. He has started several extraordinary programs that are powerful and constructive like the Brighter Future Children's Rescue Center and Feed My Lambs. These programs support ex-combatants and street children and feeding/literacy training.
- + **FAITH LAMPHIER .....#S-00187**  
(India & Africa SEJ/Conference Missionary) A Work of Heart - Sharing God's love through hands-on classes in sewing, cooking, and hand-crafts. The skills learned provide an opportunity for the girls and women to gain self-confidence and, often, increase the family income.



- + **GARY WAYNE LOCKLEAR.....#982955**  
(Rockingham District) A Church and Community Worker, Gary serves the Rockingham District Native American Cooperative Ministry within the NC Conference. Main goal is to grow the Native American churches and leadership in the coming years and to explore the possibility of developing congregations in all Native American communities in the Conference.
  
- + **DAVID MARKAY .....#12192Z**  
(Milan, Italy) David is assigned to the Methodist Church of Milan in Italy with a missional emphasis of "Offering hospitality to the stranger/Being the church together." He offers ministries of preaching, teaching, pastoral care, sacramental ministry and administrative oversight.
  
- + **KRISTIN MARKAY.....#12193Z**  
(Milan, Italy) Kristin is assigned to the Methodist Church of Milan in Italy with a missional emphasis of "Offering hospitality to the stranger/Being the church together." She offers ministries of preaching, teaching, pastoral care, sacramental ministry and administrative oversight.
  
- + **NARA MELKONYAN.....#S-00004**  
(Armenia) Nara is the Director of Project AGAPE. She coordinates ministry and relief efforts at Project AGAPE in Armenia. See Project AGAPE under World Mission Lane
  
- + **VICKIE SIGMON .....#982916**  
(Winston-Salem, NC) Vickie works in a high risk community developing Christian community, promoting social justice and proclaiming God's loving presence.
  
- + **VICTOR TARYOR.....#3019571**  
(Liberia, Africa) Victor is hospital administrator for Ganta Hospital, a position he has held since 2006. Also a registered nurse, Victor oversees the daily operation of the hospital while communicating with hospital staff to insure the hospital is providing the best possible care to each patient.
  
- + **HERBERT ZIGBUO .....#10911Z**  
(Liberia, Africa) Herbert is serving as Vocational Training Coordinator, seeking to improve and develop vocational training programs in selected United Methodist Schools.
  
- + **MARY ZIGBUO.....#10721Z**  
(Liberia, Africa) Mary is assisting the church to develop a program that cares for physical, educational, and spiritual needs of disabled populations.

Any other GBGM MISSIONARY listed in PARTNERSHIP FOR MISSION. <http://new.gbgm-umc.org/work/missionaries/biographies/>

## Lane Four: UMCOR

1. **UMCOR DISASTER RESPONSE ..#901670**  
Enables UMCOR to respond to persons in need after natural disasters in the United States.
  
2. **GLOBAL REFUGEE RESPONSE .....#982540**  
An opportunity for United Methodists, through UMCOR, to assist refugees worldwide..
  
3. **WORLD HUNGER/POVERTY.....#982920**  
Provides both short-term crisis relief and long-term developmental assistance to eliminate the root causes of hunger.
  
4. **BREAD FOR THE WORLD .....#982325**  
Educates and influences people to work for government policies that address the basic causes of domestic and world hunger.
  
5. **HEIFER PROJECT INTERNATIONAL.....**  
**Living Gift Program .....#982532**  
An interfaith project that provides animals and other assistance to rural families. Recipients agree to pass on the first born female offspring of their animals to someone else in need.
  
6. **CROP/CHURCH WORLD SERVICE COMMUNITY HUNGER APPEAL.....#982380**  
Funds raised by a local church in a CROP event can receive UMCOR credit. For necessary forms contact: Carolinas CROP Office, 1006 Lamond Ave., Durham, NC 27701.
  
7. **URBAN AGRICULTURE IN GAZA STRIP, Israel.....#629001**  
For urban-agriculture initiatives for refugees to improve health and income.

Any other UMCOR Advance Special listed in PARTNERSHIP IN MISSIONS or any UMCOR emergency appeal. <http://new.gbgm-umc.org/advance/projects/search>



## Lane Five: Conference Advance

\* Denotes a "fit" in more than 1 category

### CHILDREN/SCHOOLS

- + **ALL GOD'S CHILDREN UMC \* .#S-08004**  
This ministry will develop programs to meet the needs of impoverished children and youth in rural Bertie, Hertford and Northampton Counties.
- + **MISSION TO HAITI .....#S-00122**  
Many communities in Haiti do not have schools. This project is to assist in building schools and supplement teacher's salaries when possible.
- + **JERUSALEM ARC \* .....#S-00196**  
Leadership development and Christian Education for Palestinian Christian youth and young adults in Palestine and Jerusalem.
- + **PRISON MATCH \***  
**Mothers And Their Children.....#S-00054**  
An interfaith program provides mothers and their children with the support and resources necessary to maintain and strengthen family relationships and to help break the cycle of children following their parents to prison.
- + **VOLUNTEER FAMILIES  
FOR CHILDREN .....#S-00071**  
A private non-profit organization with the purpose of helping communities develop and utilizing local resources to provide emergency shelter care to children-in-crisis.
- + **YOUTH SERVICE FUND (YSF) .#S-00082**  
Supports mission projects within the annual conference and beyond, which have been selected by youth of our conference.
- + **THE PEACE.....#S-00183**  
This ministry develops programs focusing on children and parenting/teaching issues within schools and churches in workshop, seminar, conference and/or retreat settings. For Christians, parenting can be viewed as an important spiritual discipline contributing to the healthy spiritual formation and character development of children, youth and parents/teachers.

### CHURCH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- + **ALL GOD'S CHILDREN UMC \* .#S-08004**  
This ministry will develop programs to meet the needs of impoverished children and youth in rural Bertie, Hertford and Northampton Counties.
- + **MERCI MISSION CENTER.....#S-00136**  
This center provides mission and ministry program that will meet people's physical and spiritual needs. The primary function of MERCI is disaster preparedness, response, and outreach.
- + **JOHN WESLEY ENDOWMENT ..#JWEND**  
The John Wesley Endowment provides start-up, promotional, and sustaining funds for new churches established in low income communities within the bounds of the NC Conference.
- + **SHALOM ZONES IN THE NC ....#S-00105**  
Churches and communities working together to rebuild community life.
- + **CASWELL COUNTY  
PARISH, INC. ....#S-00008**  
Provides services to elderly and low-income families through Meals-on-Wheels, outreach program, fuel and rent assistance, clothing, food, & Family Violence Prevention Program.
- + **HYDE COUNTY COOPERATIVE  
PARISH .....#S-00104**  
Provides meals to the needy, recreation and other opportunities for youth, food pantry and clothes closet, transportation for elderly and those needing medical care, ministry to inmates at the Hyde Correctional Facility, drug prevention awareness, assistance to abused persons and Hispanic ministry.
- + **DISCIPLE BIBLE OUTREACH  
MINISTRY \* .....#S-00103**  
A COLLABORATIVE MINISTRY of the North Carolina and Western North Carolina Conferences developing Disciple Bible Studies, especially in small membership churches and in missional settings, particularly in prisons.
- + **A TIME TO GROW \* .....#S-00154**  
A leadership academy for new church leaders and transitional church leaders for the conference and providing support for new church development.



- + **HUNTING QUARTERS SENIOR CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP .....#S-00171**  
This program seeks to address the needs of senior citizens located in the down east area of Carteret County. It provides them the opportunity to escape the isolation of their homes, obtain information pertinent to the senior citizen's community, offers well balanced and nutritional meals, as well as entertainment.
- + **ROCKINGHAM DISTRICT PARTNERS IN MINISTRY .....#S-00193**  
Partners with local church congregations and communities to help alleviate poverty in the Rockingham District through hands-on outreach ministry with the poor and marginalized.
- + **RDPIM DIRECTOR SUPPORT ..#S-00195**  
Deaconess Melba McCallum – Provides salary support for ministry director of Rockingham District Partners in Ministry.
- + **THE PEACE .....#S-00183**  
This ministry develops programs focusing on children and parenting/teaching issues within schools and churches in workshop, seminar, conference and/or retreat settings. For Christians, parenting can be viewed as an important spiritual discipline contributing to the healthy spiritual formation and character development of children, youth and parents/teachers.

## DISASTER RECOVERY/ VOLUNTEER WORK TEAMS

- + **MERCI MISSION CENTER.....#S-00136**  
This center provides mission and ministry program that will meet people's physical and spiritual needs. The primary function of MERCI is disaster preparedness, response, and outreach.
- + **NC INTERFAITH .....#S-00108**  
Interfaith supports disaster recovery efforts by all faith groups in North Carolina.
- + **NC CONFERENCE DISASTER APPEALS .....#S-00096**
- + **NC STORMS EMERGENCY RESPONSE .....#S-00176**  
Provides funds for responding to storm-related emergencies to include any costs related to mitigating the disaster – direct support to affected

families and costs in delivering assistance.

- + **UNITED METHODIST VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION WORK TEAMS.....#S-00021**  
Provides assistance for Volunteers in Mission work teams from within the NC Conference.
- + **ISA GRANT SCHOLARSHIP .....#S-00033**  
Provides work team scholarships for persons who could not otherwise participate, especially young adults.

## ETHNIC POPULATIONS

- + **ROCKINGHAM DISTRICT NATIVE AMERICAN COOPERATIVE MINISTRIES - "EVERY MEMBER IN MINISTRY" .....#S-00143**  
Provides ministry support, collaboration among our 14 Native American United Methodist Churches, leadership development, gifts exploration and missional opportunities.
- + **HISPANIC MINISTRIES .....#S-00107**  
Ministry to fast growing Hispanic populations in North Carolina. These funds are administered by the NC Conference Hispanic Ministry Team to support an increasing number of congregations who are developing ministry to Hispanics.
- + **SANFORD DISTRICT EMBRACE HISPANIC/LATINO INITIATIVE #S-00032**  
A ministry to fast growing Hispanic population in Siler City and Sanford, served by a Spanish-speaking pastor. Worship, Bible study, fellowship, and assistance with cultural transitional needs are provided.



Bishop Gwinn offered prayers for each child attending the annual Día de los Niños / Children's Day Festival sponsored by the conference office of Hispanic/Latino Ministries.



- + **ETHNIC LOCAL CHURCH PROJECTS IN ROCKINGHAM DISTRICT ..... #S-00022**  
Funds are used to assist ethnic churches with crucial needs.
- + **JERUSALEM ARC \* .....#S-00196**  
Leadership development and Christian Education for Palestinian Christian youth and young adults in Palestine and Jerusalem.
- + **WESLEY HERITAGE PROJECT #S-00097**  
Gifts help distribute *Obras de Wesley*, the works of John and Charles Wesley in Spanish.
- + **"EMBRACE" HISPANIC LATINO MINISTRIES OF NEW BERN DISTRICT#S-00172**  
A fund to supplement income to Lay Missioners and Pastors of Hispanic Latino ministries throughout the New Bern District.
- + **THE PEACE .....#S-00183**  
This ministry develops programs focusing on children and parenting/teaching issues within schools and churches in workshop, seminar, conference and/or retreat settings. For Christians, parenting can be viewed as an important spiritual discipline contributing to the healthy spiritual formation and character development of children, youth and parents/teachers.

## HUNGER, HUMANITARIAN RELIEF, MEDICAL CARE

- + **NO HUNGRY NEIGHBORS..... #S-00123**  
A ministry of raising awareness, and eliminating hunger here in our own state. NHN support the various food banks in our Conference and Society of St. Andrew.
- + **CONGREGATIONAL FOOD PANTRY SUPPORT .....#S-00155**  
To provide grant support for the creation and operation of local church food pantries.
- + **STOP HUNGER NOW.....#S-00101**  
Provides immediate relief to famine affected areas around the world.
- + **NC OFFICE, SOCIETY OF ST. ANDREW POTATO PROJECT, Durham, NC .....#S-00081**  
Coordinates and runs all hunger programs for Society of St. Andrew in North Carolina. Millions of pounds of produce saved and distributed

in North Carolina at a cost of just 3 cents per pound.

- + **FOOD BANK OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN NC ..... #S-00025**  
Distributes food at minimal cost to hunger ministries in central and eastern North Carolina.
- + **ALLIANCE MEDICAL MINISTRY .#S-00142**  
This ministry was founded to provide affordable primary medical care to low-income, uninsured, working families in Wake County. This ministry aims to serve the working poor, families generally earning less than \$25,000 annually, who have no health insurance.
- + **GOLDEN CROSS..... #S00153**  
This ministry reaches out in love to the laity in the NC Conference who are experiencing financial difficulty due to excessive medical expenses.

## INSTITUTIONAL PROGRAMS

- + **BOARD OF MISSIONS CHURCH CONSTRUCTION MINISTRY .....#S-00194**  
Supports the construction ministry in the NC Conference for building new church structures and refurbishing existing facilities. This ministry utilizes a conference contractor and volunteers and is used primarily for congregations that otherwise would not be able to afford to rebuild.
- + **NC COUNCIL OF CHURCHES....#S-00051**  
Gives witness to the unity that God has given through Christ, to the churches in NC. It is an instrument for cooperative study and action, especially on matters of justice; child and family advocacy; violence against women; public policy advocacy; rural crisis and farm workers advocacy; disaster relief; criminal justice; workplace safety; peace-making; AIDS ministry; and Christian unity.
- + **DISTRICT BOARDS OF MISSION**  
Funds should be sent directly to the District Board and reported at year-end on Table II as Conference Advance.
 

Burlington .....	#S-00201
Durham .....	#S-00202
Elizabeth City .....	#S-00203
Fayetteville .....	#S-00204
Goldsboro .....	#S-00205
Greenville .....	#S-00206
New Bern .....	#S-00207





**Camp & Retreat Ministries** offers year-round programs for all ages and shares the message of God's love beyond church walls.

Methodist University.....#S-00028  
NC Wesleyan College.....#S-00029

d. *Benevolent Funds of the Methodist Retirement Homes*..... #S-03600

e. *Benevolent Funds of the Methodist Home for Children*..... #S-03500

f. *Asbury Homes*..... #S-03501

+ **A TIME TO GROW \***.....#S-00154

A leadership academy for new church leaders and transitional church leaders for the conference and providing support for new church development.

## PRISON MINISTRIES

+ **PRISON MATCH \***

**Mothers And Their Children**..... #S-00054

An interfaith program provides mothers and their children with the support and resources necessary to maintain and strengthen family relationships and to help break the cycle of children following their parents to prison.

+ **YOKEFELLOW**

**PRISON MINISTRIES** ..... #S-00078

Educates church people concerning Christian responsibility for persons affected by crime and brings Christians into direct service ministries with prison inmates and their families.

+ **DISCIPLE BIBLE OUTREACH**

**MINISTRY \*** ..... #S-00103

A COLLABORATIVE MINISTRY of the North Carolina and Western North Carolina Conferences developing Disciple Bible Studies, especially in small membership churches and in missional settings, particularly in prisons.

## DISTRICT PROJECTS

The Annual Conference will approve district projects for advance specials in accordance with *The Book of Discipline*. This ensures that local churches making advance specials on a district level and recorded on monthly remittance reports to the Treasurer's Office will receive credit.

Raleigh .....#S-00208  
Rockingham .....#S-00209  
Rocky Mount .....#S-00210  
Sanford .....#S-00211  
Wilmington .....#S-00212

+ **CONFERENCE EVANGELISTS..** #S-00079  
To provide support for NC Conference approved evangelists.

+ **ALL NEW CHURCHES LESS THAN FIVE YEARS OLD** .....#S-08000

+ **THE FOLLOWING UNITED METHODIST INSTITUTIONAL PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS**

a. *United Methodist Camps:*

Chestnut Ridge .....#S-00062  
Don Lee .....#S-00063  
Kerr Lake .....#S-00064  
Rockfish.....#S-00065

b. *Wesley Foundation for*

*The UMC Campus Ministry Association*

Duke University .....#S-00073  
ECU, Greenville .....#S-00074  
NC State University .....#S-00075  
UNC-Pembroke.....#S-00076  
UNC-Chapel Hill.....#S-00077

c. *General Scholarship Funds:*

Duke Divinity School.....#S-00026  
Louisburg College.....#S-00027



# 2009 Rainbow Covenant Report Form

Complete all information for your congregation and return to your District Missions Secretary. Completing this form ensures that your church will be recognized for its work in missions in the past year.

1. Did your church complete the first mile of United Methodist Missions by paying 100% of its 2009 apportionments (World Service & Connectional Ministries, Episcopal Fund, Interdenominational Cooperation, Black Colleges, Africa University Fund and Past Service Liability)? ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Did your church go the second mile by giving to the Advance for missions? ☐ Yes ☐ No  
If yes, list the projects supported and the amounts given to each: (use additional paper if necessary):

Remember: To be recognized as a Rainbow Covenant church, churches must pay 100% of all 2009 apportionments and give a contribution in each of the five lanes. The six Special Sunday offerings are not included.

## District Mission Secretaries

**Burlington** – Rev. Terry Huffines

First UMC, PO Box 923, Elon, NC 27244-0923  
(336) 584-5263 (o) Email: thuffines@nccumc.org

**Durham** – Kay Deans

2151 Kittrell Road, Kittrell, NC 27544  
(252) 492-0168 (o) Email: kdeans@ncol.net

**Elizabeth City** – Rev. Greg Barrick

PO Box 62, Gatesville, NC 27938  
(252) 357-0611 (o) Email: gbarrick@nccumc.org

**Fayetteville** – Rev. Michael Hale

The PEACE, 4948 Lattimore St., Hope Mills, NC 28348  
(910) 987-3753 (o) Email: mhale@nccumc.org

**Goldsboro** – Mike Whatley

1811 O'Berry Center Road, Goldsboro, NC 27530  
(919) 735-9838 (o) Email: mwhatley@earthlink.net

**Greenville** – Rev. Bobby Fletcher

106 E. Church Street, Williamston, NC 27892  
(252) 792-3360 (o) Email: bfletch@nccumc.org

**New Bern** – Rev. Connie Stutts

637 Farm Life Avenue, Vanceboro, NC 28586  
(252) 671-7143 (c) Email: cstutts@nccumc.org

**Raleigh** – Rev. Jo Elaine Harris

10621 Silverwood Creek Dr., Raleigh, NC 27614  
(919) 787-0544, Ext. 19 (o) Email: joelaine@nccumc.org

**Rockingham** – Roberta Foster

PO Box 395, Laurel Hill, NC 28351 (910) 268-4503 (h)

**Rocky Mount** – Rev. Kris Williams

PO Box 13, Pinetops, NC 27864  
(252) 827-4176 (o) Email: kwilliams@nccumc.org

**Sanford** – Rev. Patricia Sykes

512 Scotland Ave. Rockingham, NC 28379  
(910) 974-4454 (o) Email: pssykes@nccumc.org

**Wilmington** – Rev. William Haddock, Jr.

Wrightsboro UMC, 3300 N. Kerr Ave., Wilmington, NC 28405 (910) 762-2583 (o) Email: revbillh@nccumc.org

Church

District

Church Mailing Address

Chairperson of Missions/Outreach

Lane 1: World

Lane 2: National

Lane 3: Missionary Salary Support

Lane 4: UMCOR

Lane 5: Conference Advance

Grand total of all gifts given to the Advance \_\_\_\_\_

Your church membership at the end of 2009 \_\_\_\_\_

Per-member giving to the Advance for 2009  
(divide grand total by membership) \_\_\_\_\_

Name & phone # of person completing this form: \_\_\_\_\_

Return this form to your District Missions Secretary by January 31, 2010. NOTE: Send contributions to the NCC Treasurer's Office. Check with them for the due dates for Advances and Apportionments.



# Conference Media Resource Center

Open to all local churches in the North Carolina Conference, The Walton Memorial, NC Conference Media Center is located in the United Methodist Building in Raleigh. It has over 2,500 video and printed resources available for checkout. You may come to the Center and browse through the available resources or from the convenience of your office or home, look through the Online Catalog.

Ordering resources can be completed by phone or email. If you have questions or need suggestions, contact Laura Bailey, Director. Resources include materials for teacher training, mission awareness, age level studies, expert-lead Bible classes, stewardship programs, curriculum examples. These and other items are available to preview and for use in ministries of the local church.

**NCC Media Center Director: Laura Bailey**

**919-832-9560 or 1-800-849-4433**

**Email: [llbailey@nccumc.org](mailto:llbailey@nccumc.org)**

**Web site: [www.nccumc.org/mediacenter/](http://www.nccumc.org/mediacenter/)**

## **All Good Gifts..... DVD157**

World Service Fund, Africa University, Ministerial Education Fund, the Advance, Human Relations Day, One Great Hour of Sharing, Native American Ministries Sunday, Peace with Justice, World Communion Sunday, United Methodist Student Day are all explained in short video segments. 14 different titles on one DVD, various times 2-8 minutes.

## **Be There: UMCOR One Great**

### **Hour of Sharing.....DVD138**

Includes 3 segments: 3-minute inspirational message, 7 minutes of highlights of UMCOR work, and a music video, "We Change the World."

## **Building Churches, Changing Lives:**

### **The Ten Dollar Club..... DVD**

Our Conference's own program to help in building new churches celebrates 50 years of ministry. This video describes how the program works and how it has helped many new congregations. 10 mins.

## **Complete Ministry Audit, The..... KIT85**

Bill Easum's book to use to help 1) understand your congregation's particular character, 2) Diagnose problems and opportunities, 3) Plot strategies, and 4) Extend your mission into the community. Book with forms and assessments. CDRom with additional printouts and tools.

## **Curing Affluenza Series ..... DVD258**

Tony Campolo leads a series on evaluating our attitudes towards our time, our money and our stuff. Each tape is 20-25 minutes long, with discussion questions following the viewing available in the study guide. 150 mins.

## **Disciple Bible Outreach ..... DVD89**

DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministries is reaching out to inmates in prisons all across North Carolina. This video tells the story of this inspiring ministry.

## **Enough, Discovering Joy Through**

### **Simplicity & Generosity..... DVD265**

Adam Hamilton leads a small group study for rediscovering the Bible's wisdom on "prudent financial practices."

## **Faithful and Wise: Being a Good**

### **Steward ..... DVD30**

All the gifts that God has given us are part of our stewardship responsibilities. The six eight-minute segments of the study with discussion guide, cover how to expand our giving to every facet of our lives, "including our time, our skills and talents, our physical and spiritual environments, and our money and possessions."

## **Fundraising When Money Is Tight..... BK578**

A strategic and Practical Guide to Surviving Tough Times by Mal Warwick

## **Good \$ense/Freed-Up Biblical Financial Principles for Transforming**

### **Your Finances & Life ..... KIT50**

This program by Dick Towner and John Tofilon "will help the people in your church discover tools and develop skills that enable them to control their finances rather than allowing their finances to control them."

## **Greening Congregations Handbook . BK530**

A comprehensive handbook for individuals or church groups who want to consider issues of



sustainability and conservation in terms of the local church programming and community life. Includes references, form samples, articles.

## Healthy Congregations

### **in Every Place ..... DVD156**

Highlights and introduces the Healthy Congregations program of the Conference. 11 mins.

## Leading Edge: How to Increase Giving

### **in your Church ..... VC606**

In this training video, George Barna gives information to help churches learn "how to increase awareness and encourage good stewardship." 60 mins.

## Let the Children Give.....BK531

This book is designed to supplement an ongoing ministry with children. It will help to teach them how to use their gifts, talents, and the earth's resources as a way to show their love for God. 124 pgs.

## Living for Giving: A Wesleyan View

### **of Stewardship..... DVD209**

Bishop Kenneth L. Carder explains the spiritual discipline and Wesley traditions concerning stewardship and personal giving. The segments contain instruction and real life scenarios to challenge members of local churches. Divided into 5 sessions: Stewardship as: Christian Discipleship, Sharing in God's Mission, Vocation, Living Simply, and Call to Strategic Generosity.

## Living Our Promise:

### **Trainer's Tool Box ..... DVD195**

12 Complete training Sessions including: Overview for Church Leaders, Welcoming 201-Advanced Role Play, Worship of Welcoming, Stop the Revolving Door, Leading Through Change; and among the video clips, "The Gift." Leader's book and DVD included.

## Living with Money:

### **Adult Education Program ..... KIT30**

This program challenges participants to examine money and its use in the context of their Christian faith. It is divided into 4 parts: What is Money? Know Your Money Life, Making Peace with Money, and Balancing Life's Ledger. Leader's guide and example Participant's guide are included. 43 mins.

## Material Giving .....VC1626

Shows how to make a difference by sharing sim-

ple things such as hygiene and school supplies through UMCOR's material resource ministry. 5 mins.

## Money Matters: Financial Freedom

### **for All God's Churches ..... DVD123**

A book and DVD from Michael Slaughter who offers a year-round program for stewardship. Leadership training and program examples are included.

## Money Talks ..... VC759

One day during worship, a person puts \$1.00 in the collection plate and it starts to talk back! How the dollars given to the church are used is the rest of this story on video. 20 mins.

## Money Talks: 10 Bible-Based Sessions on Making, Saving, and Spending

### **Money ..... BK347**

"God has much to say about how we get, give, save, and spend money." A resource for youth workers on what the Bible says about using money wisely. CD includes optional support materials. 144 pgs.

## New Beginnings: My Opportunity for Giving: Stewardship

### **as a Way of Life..... KIT49**

Paul Wilkes leads this series designed to lead the congregation through an experience of learning, prayer, fellowship, and discernment. All materials are included in the multi-media kit.

## Pentecost Journey ..... VC1411

Pentecost Journey: A companion video about Hispanic ministries helps congregations learn about stereotypes and provides models of ministry that have been successful in helping churches and communities grow and minister in the name of Jesus Christ. 93 mins.

## Rethink Church ..... DVD273

"Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you," Romans 15:7 NRSV. See how your church can get involved in 'rethinking' church.

## Rich: Nooma Series ..... DVD129

Rob Bell asks questions about wealth: "Maybe what we have is enough... maybe God has blessed us... so we can bless and give to others."

## Questions of Faith V, Tape 2:

### **Whose Money Is It? ..... VC1346**

The panel discusses the following questions: Why is it hard for us to talk about money? What



does your faith have to do with your money? How can we be faithful in a consumer society? 19 mins.

### **Sharing God's Gifts: NCC 2004 .....DVD103**

Apportionments translate into Mission and Ministries, an overview of the work being done in The United Methodist Church and featuring our North Carolina Conference. 7 mins.

### **Simply Enough .....DVD185**

Tony Campolo and Shane Claiborne team-up to lead sessions on simple and just living. Choices about food, clothing, money, accountability and more, are covered in 7 sessions.

### **Supporting Leadership for Life.....VC1510**

Adults: The Black College Fund: Students and graduates emphasize the importance of educating students for a lifetime of sharing. Includes four 60-90 second vignettes. Use for worship or leadership training. 8 mins.

### **Thinking Theologically about Money BK406**

A small group study for youth, this resource explores negative and positive effects on money, attitudes towards persons based on financial resources, the reality of check and credit card debt, what is tithing and more. 6-sessions, 44 pgs.

### **Transformed Giving: Realizing Your Church's Full Stewardship Potential ..... KIT63**

A 40 day, six week church-wide study by John Ed Mathison, with DVD and supporting materials to encourage spiritual growth and commitment.

### **Upside Living**

#### **in a Downside Economy ..... DVD270**

A four-week video based study for small groups concerned with financial health based on biblical principles and money management practices led by Mike Slaughter.

### **Wesley on Giving ..... VC1202**

This video, book, and leader's guide were developed as a resource for clergy study groups; but can be adapted for use by congregational studies. The three sessions are: On Wealth, Rules for the Use of Wealth, and Fundamentals of Giving. Includes Bishop Ken Carder's study paper, "Giving from a Wesleyan Perspective." 24 mins.

### **Wonders of Wellness ..... DVD271**

Study Guide available for this program showing transforming taking place in 4 local churches in the NC Conference. Risk taking Ministry, Intentional Spiritual Formation, Radical Hospitality, Passionate Worship.

## **Additional Resources**

### **Resources by Phone**

UM Communications

1.888.346.3862

ECUFILM 1.888.346.3862

Curric-U-Phone, UM Publishing House

1.800.251.8591

Lake Junaluska Assembly

1.704.452.2881 or 1.800.222.4930

General Board of Global Ministries

Service Center

1.800.305.9857

To Order Benevolence Promotion

Resources or Special Sunday Materials

1.888.346.3862

### **Internet Resources**

NC Conference

[www.nccumc.org](http://www.nccumc.org)

NC Conference Treasurer

[www.nccumc.org/treasurer](http://www.nccumc.org/treasurer)

NCC Christian Advocate

[www.nccumc.org/advocate/](http://www.nccumc.org/advocate/)

The United Methodist Church

[www.umc.org](http://www.umc.org)

[www.umcgiving.org](http://www.umcgiving.org)

General Board of Global Ministries

[www.gbglm-umc.org](http://www.gbglm-umc.org)

Igniting Ministries

[www.ignitingministry.org](http://www.ignitingministry.org)

Center for Christian Stewardship

[www.gbod.org/stewardship](http://www.gbod.org/stewardship)



# Conference Resource Persons

Would you like to have someone come interpret the conference budget and programs and services made possible through outreach giving? Call Christine Dodson, Conference Treasurer, or Bill Norton, Director of Communications, at 919-832-9560 or 1-800-849-4433 to arrange consultation.

**THE UNITED METHODIST BUILDING**  
**Monday-Friday; 8:30AM-4:30PM**  
**Phone: 919-832-9560 or 1-800-849-4433**  
**FAX: 919-834-7989**  
**[www.nccumc.org](http://www.nccumc.org)**

*Unless otherwise noted, persons listed below can be reached at The United Methodist Building.*

## NC Conference Treasurer's Office

Ms. Christine Dodson, CPA  
Treasurer/Business Administrator  
[treasurer@nccumc.org](mailto:treasurer@nccumc.org)

Ms. Ivanna Cole, CPA  
Controller  
[icole@nccumc.org](mailto:icole@nccumc.org)

## Council on Finance & Administration Officers

Rev. Danny Allen, President  
P.O. Box 715  
Washington, NC 27889  
(252) 946-3311  
[dallen@nccumc.org](mailto:dallen@nccumc.org)

Ms. Sheila Ahler, CPA,  
Vice President  
3521 Pinnacle Dr.  
Cary, NC 27518

Rev. Dennis Goodwin,  
Cabinet Representative  
1329 Glenburnie Road  
New Bern, NC 28562  
(252) 635-9704  
[dgoodwin@nccumc.org](mailto:dgoodwin@nccumc.org)

Ms. Sylvia Harriss, Secretary  
205 Shady Circle Dr.  
Rocky Mount, NC 27803

## Ministerial Relations

Director  
Rev. Tim Russell  
[trussell@nccumc.org](mailto:trussell@nccumc.org)

Director of New  
Faith Ministries  
TBA

Commission  
on Stewardship Chair  
Rev. Gypsie Murdaugh  
[gmurdaugh@nccumc.org](mailto:gmurdaugh@nccumc.org)

## Connectional Ministries

Rev. Carol Goehring,  
Executive Director  
[cgoehring@nccumc.org](mailto:cgoehring@nccumc.org)

## NCC Ministry Directors

Children, Youth &  
Young Adult Ministries  
Ms. Sue Ellen Nicholson  
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Dr. James W. Thurman, Jr., retired pastor from the North Georgia Conference, discusses how to promote interfaith relations. To his left, Atif Mahmood, a Duke University student, prepares to share his ideas.

## Interfaith peace begins in the heart, requires action

With a sense of purpose, 403 Hebrews, Muslims and Christians from 16 states and 4 countries gathered at the Lake Junaluska Peace Conference September 20-22.

Participants discussed how to implement interfaith peace-building techniques once they returned to their own communities.

Keynote speakers representing each of the Abrahamic Faith agreed that action must be taken in order to make peace a reality.

"It is not enough to be peace contemplators – we need to be proactive peace actors," said Elias Chacour, Archbishop of the Galilee. "There's

no other way but to get our hands dirty."

Rabbi Mordechai Liebling agreed. "Peace is not theoretical – peace is not abstract. Peace is something we have to do every day."

On the second day of the conference, participants attended dialogue groups to discuss what they could do in their own communities to foster

See "Peace Conference," page 3

## MERCI and Banded Brothers partner for disaster response

By Bill Norton \*

They are called the Banded Brothers. Their ministry was born out of response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The MERCI Mission Center became the North Carolina Conference hub for disaster response following Hurricane Floyd in 1999. Today, the two are in a partnership for disaster response and other related ministry needs in Eastern North Carolina.

The MERCI Center, located in Goldsboro, has two warehouses with 46,000 feet of indoor space and 22 acres of land.

Supplies, like flood buckets and health kits, are assembled and stored in the warehouses.

Building supplies are stored and disbursed from MERCI.

Classrooms on the campus are

used for volunteer training. Housing and shower facilities are available for volunteers both on campus and at response locations.

Banded Brothers are about 30 men that formed a non-profit 501(c)3 organization to better enable them to raise funds and grants from corporations and other groups. MERCI is solely supported by donations and grants and is experiencing difficulty raising funds to operate and for ministry response.

The Banded Brothers membership includes retired attorneys and individuals from management positions in corporations, accountants, bankers, general contractors, and other individuals in construction.

About 95% of the members of Banded Brothers are members of Fuquay-Varina UMC, said Charlie Gray, the president and registered agent for the non-profit group.

To learn about Banded Brothers, the conversation begins with Charlie

See "MERCI Center," page 6



Charlie Gray

## "Can These Dry Bones Live?" asks SBC event

The Strengthening the Black Church (SBC) Convocation centered around the Ezekiel 37:3 scripture, "Can these dry bones live?"

The answer heard at the convocation was a resounding "Yes" and that God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things to restore a dead church.

The keynote speaker was the Rev. Kevass Harding, Senior Pastor of Dellrose UMC in Wichita, KS. Since his appointment to Dellrose in 1998, the congregation has grown from 25 to 800 members.

Harding attributes the growth of the church to dynamic teaching, fellowship, praise and worship, and to the fact that Dellrose is a place where everyone feels the love of God, finds the joy of Christ, and experi-

ences the power of the Holy Spirit.

In his address, Harding reminded attendees that the spirit of the Lord was leading and influencing Ezekiel. He recommended that churches engage in Praise under the Influence,

or "PUI." Churches wanting to live again must be willing to go outside their comfort zones; preaches must prophesy, not please or fix the bones.

See "SBC Convocation," page 5



Closing worship was led by the Rev. Telley Gadson, Sr. Pastor, St. Mark UMC, Sumter, S.C. along with the praise team Judah Prayze and the Aaron's Mime Ministry.



## Commissioning for Global Mission vocations reaches a global Methodist community

By Elliott Wright \*

The United Methodist Church formally commissioned 40 persons to mission vocations in a service of celebration and commitment on the night of October 13 in Stamford, CT.

Thirty-one missionaries were blessed and sent, along with seven new deaconesses and two home missionaries, who form a special office of mission commitment.

They were commissioned in the presence of an on-site congregation of 300 and a worldwide community taking part via a live internet broadcast--the first such occasion for the commissioning of United Methodist missionaries.

The service took place during the annual meeting of directors of the General Board of Global Ministries, the mission agency of the denomination.

Eight of the 31 missionaries are international missionaries and six mission interns who initially go to assignments outside the United

States. The others work in the US in a variety of ministries. Countries or regions of the international assignments include the Caribbean, Southeast Asia, Cambodia, Japan, Liberia, Mongolia, Southern Africa, and Ukraine.

Those commissioned come from 24 United Methodist annual (regional) conferences of the church in the US and will serve in about that same number.

One international missionary has roots in the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas, one person is originally from Colombia, South America, and one was born in Liberia and has now returned there in mission.

### Related to North Carolina

Persons in seven categories of mission service were commissioned on October 13. Those commissioned who are connected to the North Carolina and Western North Carolina Conferences include:

♦ Rosanna Panizo-Valladares,



Five missionaries related to the North Carolina and Western North Carolina Conferences were commissioned in October: (Front row L-R) Mary Cameron Kempson, Rosanna Panizo-Valladares; (Back row L-R) Alexandria Jones, Charles Barrow, and Amanda Thrasher. (Photo by Cassandra M. Zampini/GBGM)

Durham, North Carolina Annual Conference. She was commissioned as a National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry Missionary. These missionaries serve in annual conferences and special ministries in the US through a plan authorized by

The United Methodist Church. Panizo-Valladares is assigned as a pastor and community developer, Durham District.

♦ Charles Barrow, Snow Hill, in the North Carolina Annual

See "Commissioning," page 4



**Carolina Ballet**  
Robert Weiss, Artistic Director

# MESSIAH

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# UMW to create, to carry, to connect, and to continue

The North Carolina Conference of United Methodist Women met at Fayetteville University on Oct. 10. Conference President, Ann Davis convened the 37th annual meeting with a special welcome to the approximately 450-registered attendees.

The Raleigh District served as host for this meeting.

The 2009-2012 quadrennial theme "We are sent out in God's Mission to create, to carry, to connect and to continue" was introduced. Martha Caves, Anita Williams and Susan Southerland made the quadrennial theme banner.

The business session opened with the awarding of the 2008 Book of Reports to Bill Norton. As conference staff representative to the United Methodist Women, award presenters cited Norton's willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty to help when needed. They noted that UMW has been able to depend on Norton, who regularly attends Executive Committee Meetings and is present and available to help during the annual meetings. As director of Communications, Norton keeps UMW's "mission stories" before the conference.

## Candle Burning ceremony

Melba McCallum, Conference Education & Interpretation Coordinator, led the Candle Burning ceremony along with the 12 District Education and Interpretation Coordinators. The cost for one minute is \$36. Each district lit a candle that represented the amount of dollars collected and the number of hours that each candle burned in honor or in memory of a special loved one. The total money collected for Candle Burning was \$47,048.63.

Juanita Staples, Scholarship Chairperson, reported that 13 women received scholarships. Ten women will attend Methodist University, one will attend Louisburg College and two will attend Duke Divinity School. The total amount awarded was \$10,000.

## Mission accomplishments

The following mission accomplishments were celebrated:

- ◆ The Reading Banner was presented to the Raleigh District.
- ◆ The Goldsboro District was the recipient of the Study Jewel.
- ◆ Harper UMC, Wilmington District, organized a new local unit.
- ◆ Moyock UMC, Elizabeth City District reorganized a local unit.

In recognition of the Mission Today program, 35 local units received Gold Certificates for their completion of 20 out of 21 possible

items required to achieve the gold status.

## Budget and officers

The 2010 budget was presented by Sandra Mendell, Conference Treasurer, and approved by the voting body. The Pledge to Mission for 2010 is \$440,000. These funds are generated from approximately 19,500 faithful local unit members.

Jeanne Rouse, former Conference UMW President installed the 2010 slate of Conference officers: President-Ann Davis; Vice President-Theresa Hodges; Secretary-Sandra Croom; Treasurer-Sandra Mendell; Social Action Coordinator-JoAnn Barbour; Education and Interpretation-

Melba McCallum; Membership, Nurture and Outreach-Madoline Murphy; Spiritual Growth-JoAnn Stanford; Chairperson of Nominations-LaNella Smith; Communications Coordinator-Ceil Matthews; Secretary of Program Resources-Ann Krieger; 39 & Under Representative-Stephanie Wright; Committee on Nominations- Patty Stricklin, Susan Rayle, Claire Robinson, Kendall McDougald, Jackie Wenberg and Ann Derr.

## Remembrance and worship

JoAnn Stanford, Spiritual Growth Coordinator led the Remembrance Service. Districts recognized each deceased UMW member in 2009.

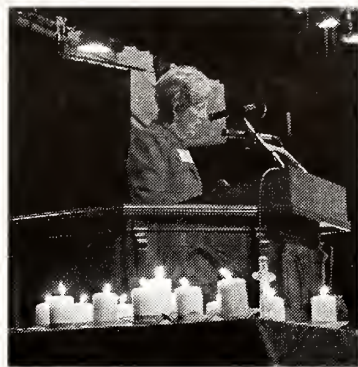
The program concluded with a Service of Worship. The Rev. Lisa Yebuah, Minister of Community Witness at Edenton Street UMC in Raleigh, preached the sermon entitled "An Extraordinary Call."

The love offering was \$2091.00. Bishop Al Gwinn led the Communion Service.

District Superintendents Sam Wynn and Jonathan Strother and Yebuah assisted the District UMW Spiritual Growth Coordinators in administering the elements.

Davis closed the meeting with the challenge for everyone to take their Cross into the world.

The congregation sang the chorus of 'Let's Go Fly a Kite.'

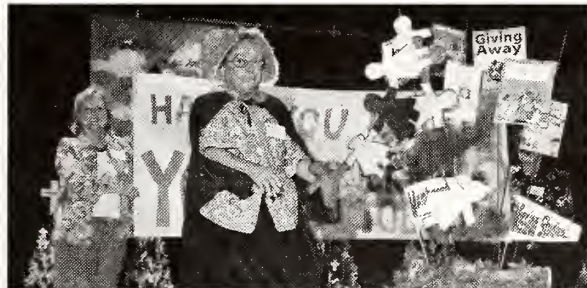


LEFT: The 2010 budget was presented by Sandra Mendell, UMW Treasurer, and approved by the voting body. The Pledge to Mission for 2010 is \$440,000. To her right are the candles lit during the Candle Burning service.

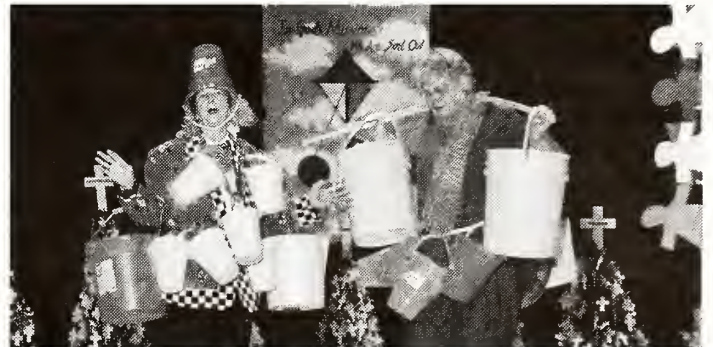
(Photos by Bill Norton)



ABOVE: Participants hold crosses shaped like a kite and sing "Let's Go Fly a Kite." They were challenged to take their cross into the world.



Madoline Murphy (center foreground), conference UMW Membership Nurture and Outreach Coordinator, during a skit on the membership announced the addition of two new units: Moyock, Elizabeth District and New Harbour in the Wilmington District. Seen behind her is Lynn Rouse of the New Bern District, holding a banner that asked the question, "Have You Filled Your Bucket Today?"



Decorated with buckets, Georgia Pilkington, Goldsboro District (left), encouraged members through a skit to attend the National Assembly, April 30-May2 in St. Louis where they could 'fill their bucket' with information to share with other United Methodist Women. Assisting with the skit is JoAnn Barbour (right), Burlington District.

## Peace conference held at Lake Junaluska *from page 1*

interfaith understanding and collaborative efforts for peace.

Atif Mahmood, a Muslim Duke University student, hopes that participants take what they've learned to heart. "This conference has reinvigorated me to go out in my community and encourage interfaith communication," he said.

Mahmood was asked by the group how he felt we as Americans, regardless of our faiths, could improve relations between our own faith and Muslims in particular.

Originally from Pakistan, he commented that an education is necessary for us to be leaders for peace. "If we just leave the country alone, things will get worse. We need infrastructure, development and education to make things better. Opening

the doors of America would better the world," he concluded. "We need to start training and exposing Muslims to our culture and let them go back and educate others."

Another dialogue group participant was Dr. James W. Thurman, Jr., a retired pastor from the North Georgia Conference.

Thurman came to listen and open his heart to what was being said about the three faiths. "Begin with making peace within your own heart. If you don't do that, anything else you do is useless," he said.

At the conclusion of the conference, ideas from all the dialogue groups were shared. Like Mahmood and Thurman, many participants hoped to apply what they had learned from others at this conference

through practical applications for peace - like beginning an Interfaith Club that shares the spiritual reasoning of sacred texts.

Some hoped to organize interfaith peace camps for children, while others planned to begin interfaith Habitat for Humanity projects to foster interfaith cooperation.

The Lake Junaluska Peace Committee announced Marian Wright Edelman will be a featured presenter at the 2010 Peace Conference: Children at the Table of Peace. Ms. Edelman is the Founder and Director of the Children's Defense Fund.

For highlights from the 2009 Peace Conference or more information about the 2010 Peace Conference, visit [www.lakejunaluska.com/peace.aspx](http://www.lakejunaluska.com/peace.aspx).



# Commissioning for GBGM includes five related to NC *from page 2*

Conference was commissioned as a Home Missioner. He serves as an agricultural research specialist, North Carolina State University's Lower Costal Research Station in Kinston.

- ♦ Alexandria Jones, New York City, originally from Illinois. Jones was commissioned as a Church and Community Worker to serve the poor and marginalized. She is serving the National Farm Worker Ministry based in Durham.
- ♦ Mary Cameron Kempson, Asheville, Western North Carolina

Annual Conference. Kempson was commissioned as a Deaconess and is serving as executive director of intergenerational ministries at LightShare, Inc., Asheville.

- ♦ Amanda Thrasher, Winston-Salem, Western North Carolina Annual Conference, was commissioned as a US-2 missionary. US-2s serve in ministries of justice in the US for two-year terms. Thrasher will serve at Hagar's House Women's Shelter, New Orleans, LA.

## Meaning of "Commission"

To "commission" a missionary or deaconess (or home missionary, the male counterpart) is for the church to recognize God's special call and to bless and "send" that person to carry the good news of God's love into the world. It takes place through prayer and the "laying on of hands" in an ancient Christian ritual.

The term "commission" reflects the Great Commission of Matthew 28, a

passage in which, in English translation, Jesus tells his disciples to take the gospel into all the world.

It comes from a Latin root meaning to bring together and, also, to bestow permission to conduct certain work.

"What we are doing is confirming the commitment made in your baptism, your commitment to Jesus Christ," Bishop Joel N. Martinez, interim general secretary (chief executive) of Global Ministries, told the candidates for commissioning at an earlier luncheon in their honor.

He also said that the commissioning of missionaries is not a "Global Ministries moment alone but is a church-wide missional moment."

"The Holy Spirit called you, we are saying 'Amen' over you in the name of the church," Bishop Bruce R. Ough told the candidates at the lunch.

## "Become the Gospel"

Bishop Bruce R. Ough of West Ohio, president of the General Board of Global Mission Board, officiated at

the service of commissioning.

Preaching was Bishop Peter Weaver of New England, a director of the board. Using as his biblical text verses from the first chapter of the New Testament letter of I Thessalonians, he urged those being commissioned and all Christians to not only proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ but "to become the gospel."

Paraphrasing scripture, he said, "It is clear that God not only loves you very much but has his hand upon you for something special."

In the formal act of commissioning, missionaries, deaconesses, and home missionaries are charged to "take the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ into all the world."

Weaver noted that certificates of commissioning in former times "authorized" missionaries to take the gospel into the world so long as "your spirit becomes the gospel."

*\* Elliott Wright is the information officer of the General Board of Global Ministries.*

## First live webcast offered; draws international audience

At least 300 internet sites around the world linked for the entire live webcast of the worship service on October 13 in which The United Methodist Church commissioned new mission personnel.

Technicians reported that the number of locations linked peaked at about 1,000.

The links were literally from around the earth, including Australia, the Caribbean, Indonesia, South America, Western Europe, and the United States.

The first broadcast of its kind in Methodist mission history, the webcast was planned and implemented by the Mission Communications section of the General Board of Global Ministries, with assistance by United Methodist Communications.

Video of the service of commissioning as well as photos can be viewed at [ummissionaries.org](http://ummissionaries.org).

## Commissioning service is both solemn and joyful

Like the ordination of clergy, the commissioning of missionaries is an occasion both solemn and joyful. In the context of worship, candidates are questioned on their call to mission.

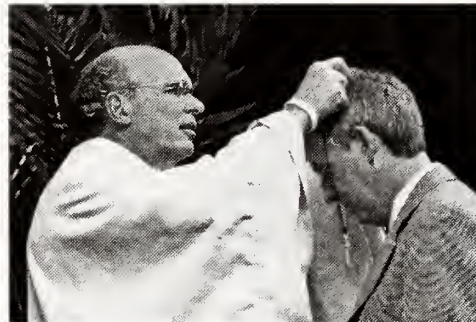
They promise to be diligent in prayer, Bible reading, and study to increase their skills.

They make pledges to work in sincerity, love, and cooperation with coworkers under the direction of the church.

Candidates are then presented individually to a small group of commissioners, representing both the laity and the clergy.

They kneel, receive the imposition of hands, and hear the presiding bishop officer say: "I commission you to take the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ into all the world."

After arising, each person commissioned receives a cross in the shape of an anchor, which is the symbol of United Methodist mission service.

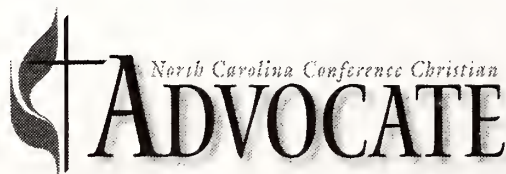


ABOVE: Home Missioner Charles Barrow receives an anchor cross from Bishop Peter Weaver. Each person commissioned receives an anchor cross symbolizing United Methodist mission service.



LEFT: Rosanna Panizo-Valladares is commissioned a missionary for the National Plan for Hispanic and Latino Ministries.

*Photos by Cassandra M. Zampini*



## Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org).

Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

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## EcoEternity forest consecrated at Chestnut Ridge

Sunday, October 11 at 2:30 pm, Bishop Al Gwinn joined Chestnut Ridge Camp and Retreat Center staff and friends to consecrate one acre of land alongside Lake Fellowship as an EcoEternity Forest.

Under a beautiful blue sky and autumn shades of leaves, guests congregated at the outdoor chapel overlooking the lake to participate in the consecration.

An EcoEternity Forest is an alternative green burial concept where memorial trees are chosen as final resting places for the cremated ashes of individuals, families, or friends.

In the last decade, cremation has steadily gained popularity, and people are increasingly selecting natural, green burial settings for their final resting place. A natural environment provides peace, freedom, and continuity.

In addition to providing a natural resting place, the EcoEternity Forest provides family and friends with the opportunity to share a resting place



Those gathered for the consecration of the EcoEternity Forest, including Bishop Al Gwinn and his wife Joyce, toured the forest area which overlooks Lake Fellowship.

beneath the same tree, effectively restoring the concept of a family burial plot which is difficult in a more urbanized, geographically dispersed culture.

Located in Effland, the forest overlooks beautiful Lake Fellowship. It provides both the gift of community and also the quiet sounds of nature and restful solitude. In the forest are a variety of indigenous trees including White Oak, Shagbark Hickory, Birch, Maple, and Tulip Poplar.

The consecration service included a welcome from Rhonda Parker, Chestnut Ridge Center Director. Scripture readings were provided by Nick Jeffries and Molly Kacal.

David Hamilton provided music for the event. Bishop Gwinn consecrated the soil.

Forester Terry Hackett spoke about the varying and unique forests of Chestnut Ridge. Hackett also affirmed, "For me, however, the ecology of this forest is only part of the allure. It is the healing power of these woods that make Camp Chestnut Ridge truly unique. It is the spirit of this forest that draws me here. I hope your spirit will also find solace among these trees."

Rhonda Parker, Center Director added, "The addition of an EcoEternity Forest at Chestnut Ridge completes our mission to make the love of Christ visible to the world from the cradle to the grave. This forest demonstrates faithful stewardship of creation through our lives and in our deaths. It embodies the hope that we proclaim in Christ Jesus: even though we die, yet shall we live."

For more information, go to [www.campchestnutridge.org](http://www.campchestnutridge.org) or call 919-338-2820.



Molly Kacal

## SBC convocation *continued from page 1*

Worship on Saturday was led by the Rev. Sherry Daniels, Senior Pastor of Norfolk UMC in Norfolk, Virginia. Her sermon was titled "Medicine for Dry Bones."

Proclamation of the word was her prescribed medicine, followed by a 4-phased lifestyle based on 2 Chronicles 7:11-22: Humble one's self, pray, seek God's face and let go of the past, and turn from wicked ways.

Dr. Carl Arrington, Director of African-American Ministries at Lake Junaluska, facilitated a panel discussion of Effective Clergy and Lay Leadership. The discussion emphasized that it takes everyone, clergy

and laity, working together with a vision to bring dry bones back to life.

Closing worship was led by the Rev. Telley Gadson, Sr. Pastor, St. Mark UMC, Sumter, S.C. along with a praise team, Judah Prayze, and Aaron's Mime Ministry. Participants all left feeling that churches can thrive and survive, for "Recess Is Over."

The Convocation was attended by persons from North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia Annual Conferences. This bi-annual event was planned by the NC SBC Committee under the leadership of Dr. Lawrence Johnson, Director of Multicultural Ministries.

## Resources for World AIDS Day, Advent

ZOE Ministry has developed resources for World AIDS Day and Advent. Visit [www.zoeministry.org](http://www.zoeministry.org) to download or sign up for these materials:

- ♦ World AIDS Day Litany of Prayer: bulletin inserts, video clips, leaders guide.
- ♦ Weekly Advent Prayer Emails: Prepared for ZOE by Bishop Hope Morgan Ward. Signup online by November 29 to receive these emails.
- ♦ God Is Good! Advent 2009 Devotional Booklet: (PDF) Written for all ages, especially children and families.
- ♦ Hope for Christmas Animal Project: Includes individual giving opportunities as well as bulletin inserts for churches and gift cards for Alternative Giving Projects.

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# "Will the Real John Wesley Please Stand Up?"

## MU Hosts Wesley heritage celebration, musical

In conjunction with Wesley Heritage Weekend, Methodist University will present *Ride! Ride!*—a two-act musical with music by Australian composer, Penelope Thwaites, and libretto by Alan Thornhill, based on events in the life of John Wesley.

*Ride! Ride!* will be presented in Reeves Auditorium Thursday-Saturday, Nov. 19-21 at 7:30 p.m., and Sunday, Nov. 22 at 4:00 p.m.

The fully-staged production will feature a cast drawn from Methodist University as well as the Fayetteville community.

The plot highlights the courage and risk-taking of early Methodists—particularly Martha Thompson, who begins a ministry to the inmates of the notorious asylum, Bedlam.

A Wesley Workshop designed for general audiences will be presented

from 9:30am-5:00pm, Nov. 21. The workshops explore the relevance of Wesley's life and thought for the 21st century.

The registration fee is \$25, which includes the workshop, lunch, and free admission to a performance of *Ride! Ride!*

For those interested in purchasing tickets to the musical, the cost for a general admission ticket is \$10.

A discounted ticket price of \$5 is available for groups of five or more (group rate), seniors, military ID card holders, and students with a valid student ID card.

To register for the workshop or for more information about the performance, contact the university's Campus Ministry office at (910) 630-7157 or send an e-mail to dlwilson@methodist.edu.

## MERCI Center partners with Banded Brothers *continued from page 1*

Gray. However, he is quick to say that the Banded Brothers group "is not about Charlie Gray" but is about God calling men into ministry.

Gray has 15 years of experience in banking, 10 years in building houses, and eight years as the head of a truck driving school. He is a licensed building contractor.

At the driving school, individuals are taught to drive a truck but also receive assistance in getting jobs which will get them back on their feet, Gray said when describing his school. He said this responsibility is a ministry for changing lives by sharing how God is stirring his heart.

"I have a sign out front (of the school) that says 'Prayer in School? There is here,'" he said.

In 2005, stories and visuals of the destruction to the coastal areas in the Gulf of Mexico following Hurricane Katrina were constantly on television and in newspapers. Gray had been doing some mission work through his church but, like many people during that time, he was trying to do what he could to provide relief to the area and questioned what he should do next.

He was in his driving school office during August of 2005 when a nurse from Chapel Hill called. She had a tractor trailer load of goods for Mississippi but no way to get it to the area. She called him for help when she saw his telephone number on one of his trucks as it passed her windows.

Gray said his first response was that he could not help because he was not licensed to pull freight or go

outside the state. He took the nurse's name and telephone number and agreed to think about how he might provide assistance.

After talking with the NC Department of Motor Vehicles, he learned that because there was a State of Emergency "we could do things we normally could not do under normal times." This led to the first trip to Mississippi.

After the first trip and discussions of what the relief supplies meant to the area, men in and out of his church came together, his school became a collection center, and 15 trips were made to Mississippi. Home base was Heritage UMC in D'Iberville, MS.

With every trip, Gray said, a new need was discovered. One trip was a trailer loaded with 20,000 toys and another was loaded with bicycles.

"Here is the point of all of this," Gray said, because of the work on the trips "we were coming together, getting fired up and blessed and empowered. Certain men were leading trips and the same core was showing up for meetings" and through this process, Banded Brothers grew out of that leadership.

Gray helped to regenerate the United Methodist Men at his church and currently is the Raleigh District head of UMM.

He explains that the term "brother" is an identity of UMM where all men are considered brothers. The group organizing the trips to Mississippi were showing there was power in togetherness or being banded. "We found the words 'Banded Brothers' to be inspirational, brothers in Christ and banded together," Gray said.

"There were all sorts of things that connected the leadership group. Many of us have a passion for motorcycles, especially Harley Davidson," Gray said.

On a trip to Mississippi, the group learned that the D'Iberville Harley dealership was raising money

for an orphanage at Hope Haven in Waveland, MS. Ten of the men got together, Gray said, and raised \$10,000. They rode their Harleys 1800 miles to Waveland to present a \$10,000 check.

"There were guys who had not done anything like that," Gray said about the relief trips to Mississippi. "These men started going to church, getting involved in the leadership of the church," he said, "They moved from warming the pew to taking on more responsibility."

Each trip to Mississippi cost \$1500-1800 in gas. Gray said the group started raising funds and when they went to larger corporations, they would be asked if the group was a 501(c)3 non-profit.

That led to Gray working through the 100 pages of application and 150 pages of instructions to be declared a non-profit, and after two tries, Banded Brothers was approved as a 501(c)3.

"We talk about all the time that we are Christians and we have faith, hope and we like to think that Jesus is empowering us and he has a mission for us," Gray said. "We think this is what God wants us to be doing now," he said about the Banded Brothers' partnership with MERCI.

"We like the non-denominational piece of our work because we do not want any barriers," Gray said. "It is all about service—service to our Lord."

Banded Brothers use all funds raised for the specified ministry. Any expenses, such as insurance for a trailer they own, are taken from a \$250 membership fee members pay.

There are three components to what the Banded Brothers want to accomplish at MERCI.

1. Continue to develop and undergird natural disaster response and do it well.
2. Be very intentional, very conscientious about the mission and ministry work and market

what MERCI is doing.

3. Create a retreat center on about 10-12 acres of undeveloped property at MERCI. Thus there would be two entities, the retreat center and MERCI. The retreat center would be used for local church retreats or those for other ministries, such as the Walk to Emmaus. A purpose is to generate revenue that will benefit MERCI.

Gray said the retreat center would be the most challenging of the three components.

"It is important that everyone understands that this is a place that is totally for the purpose of undergirding our faith and our mission of making disciples. As long as we can be connected with that, we will be blessed," Gray said.

For the present, the Banded Brothers will not be taking on any new projects, but they will be finishing projects that have begun. They will also be taking inventory and developing a plan of operation.

The group plans to reach out to other volunteer groups to let them know what MERCI is and how it can work with other groups in mission and ministry. One way Gray cited was hosting the January meeting of VOAD, the statewide organization for volunteer groups.

"The days in this place were numbered," he said talking about MERCI. "We have to change."

"If someone has problems before they find out what is going on then their heart is not in the right place. I am guilty of shooting from the hip before getting full answers, but my prayer and my hope is that anybody that loves MERCI, that has been a part of MERCI or wants to be a part of MERCI will give us a chance," Gray said.

\* Bill Norton is Advocate editor and conference director of communications.

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# ARE YOU READY?

North Carolina has six major military installations and has the 3rd largest military presence in the country.

Changes expected through 2011 will increase the military presence in the state by record numbers.

The increases represent the "largest single job growth event in the state of North Carolina since the World War II era," according to Gov. Beverly Perdue.

Will North Carolina Conference churches meet the challenges resulting from this growth?

## Fayetteville Area

Due to the Base Realignment and Closure plan (known as BRAC) and due to "Grow the Army" initiatives, an influx of soldiers, employees, and their dependents will be stationed at Fort Bragg and Pope Air Force Base.

By the end of 2011, an estimated 40,000 military and civilian personnel and their families will arrive at Fort Bragg. An 11-county task force is preparing the communities for the increases in people and demands on infrastructure.

As part of the BRAC plan, the U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) and the Army Reserve Command (USARC) will relocate to Fort Bragg from Fort McPherson in Georgia.

Military construction expenses are estimated at \$1.3 billion between 2006-2013, and housing needs are estimated to result in another \$336 million spent for the same time period.

## New Bern Area

As a result of the Marine Corps' "Grow the Force" plan to increase its overall national strength, the New Bern area is already seeing increases in personnel assigned to Camp Lejeune Marine Corps Base, Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station, and New River Marine Corps Air Station.

The resulting influx, when complete, means a "160% increase in the normal regional population growth...as forecast by the NC State Demographer," cites the "Regional Growth Management Plan" for the area.

The personnel transfers are already occurring and will include over 11,000 new military and civilian personnel along with their dependents. As many as 61,000 new residents could come to the seven county region by 2011.

Sources: "Comprehensive Regional Growth Plan for the Fort Bragg Region: Executive Summary" September 2008.

"Regional Growth Management Plan: Draft," Military Growth Task Force of NC's Eastern Region; July 2009.



## BRAC STANDS FOR "BE READY ALL CHURCHES"

*A commentary by the Rev. Mary Frances McClure and her husband, Sgt. Mark Merryman, 82nd Airborne Division, U.S. Army \**

Unless you have a family member in the military or serve in the military yourself, you may or may not pay attention to military issues. Years ago when the previous Base Realignment And Closure commission met and made recommendations, people in North Carolina hardly paid attention because Fort Bragg, Camp Lejeune, and Cherry Point weren't being closed. At that point, BRAC didn't affect our everyday lives.

Today, however, we are mere months from the U.S. Army Reserve Command and U. S. Army Forces Command moving from Fort McPherson, Ga. to Fort Bragg. BRAC will affect our every day lives in ways we cannot imagine as of yet. As the Church in the eleven counties being impacted by this latest round of BRAC, we had best pay attention.

Over 40 thousand soldiers and government employees will filter into the greater Fort Bragg area over the next three years. We will see crowded roads, crowded schools, crowded doctor's offices, and crowded shopping centers.

Will we see crowded churches as well? Many people here in the Fayetteville District think we can put out signs, do a big United Methodist fair, or put an ad in a military publication and people will come to our churches.

Speaking as a military couple, we are not sure it will be that simple to bring military people through our front doors. First of all, most mili-

tary people and families don't attend church. If a husband or wife spends 50% or more of his/her time deployed in a war zone and even when s/he is here, s/he spends 6am to 6pm at work, Sunday morning may be important family time or time to read the paper or simply to go to Starbucks.

Secondly, many people first attend a church for the children's activities and support system it provides along with the religious aspect. Military people and families have a built-in support system within their units and have many children's activities available on Post, so they may not think they "need" church.

Lastly, if a family decides to walk through our doors, will they find a reason to stay?

We invite each and every church to take this time prior to January 2011 when the first wave of families arrives to scrutinize your practices, define your mission to your community, and figure out what you are about as a congregation.

Is your church relevant to the community and does it make the Gospel relevant to everyday life? Is your pastor preaching the same old sermons he has preached in the same style he has preached them for twenty years? Is your church open to outsiders or do you have to have a certain last name to break into the social circle at church?

See "Be Ready All Churches," page 8



# BE READY ALL CHURCHES *continued from page 7*

Military families may visit your church once if it is convenient to their homes. However, if churches aren't relevant, military families won't come back. If our preaching is mediocre, they won't come back. If our doors are open but our circles of friendship are closed, they won't come back.

We encourage congregations across the NC Conference to examine themselves in the following areas we believe are key to military people and their families. How can your congregation be prepared?

## Web presence

Websites will be even more important with the influx of military families. When you move with the Army, you may or may not have an opportunity to come to your new community prior to transition. The web shows you the house you want, the church you want to try, and the schools you want your children to attend.

If a church, regardless of size, doesn't have a web presence, it may be overlooked by military newcomers.

Military people just don't have time to deal with hunting on foot or in the phone book. The web is a great way to tell people what is unique and wonderful about a congregation. If you have a preschool or afterschool program, does your website have information? Are applications available online? The Internet is a powerful tool at your disposal.

## Reputation

Word of mouth will be important especially because people will move

en masse with BRAC. Many of the people coming from Atlanta will know one another.

For every family you don't welcome, be aware that 10 other families will not give you that chance because of word of mouth. If you alienate someone, your church's reputation will hit the email loop at lightning speed. People may or may not share a positive experience they have at a church with others. However, if you treat someone poorly, they will let everyone know about it.

Similarly, if your church has a reputation in the community, incoming soldiers and their families will hear about it. Do you want to be known for your mission work, generosity, compassion, and outreach to military families, or would you rather be known for your cliques and poor quality music?

## Leadership

Our churches must be willing to share leadership in activities more quickly than we may be used to.

A military person, who is highly skilled in leadership and knows how to get things done, will be in your congregation for a period of 3 years, if you are lucky. If you make them wait until the finance chair dies to get on the finance committee, you are missing the opportunity to tap into a valuable and well-trained resource.

## Programs for Children and Youth

These are both key areas for military families, no matter the rank. People choose churches that offer



As part of the BRAC plan, the U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) and the Army Reserve Command (USARC) will relocate to Fort Bragg from Fort McPherson in Georgia. At Fort Bragg, military construction expenses are estimated at \$1.3 billion between 2006-2013, and housing needs are estimated to result in another \$336 million spent for the same time period. (Photo by Mark Merryman)

good programs. Programs don't have to be big or flashy, just done with quality and integrity, especially in terms of the Gospel.

If your children's program consists of word searches about Jesus' disciples, then people won't be back. Word searches don't teach kids about Jesus.

Kids need to experience God and be active in their faith community. Are kids having fun and deepening their faith in your congregation? Is your nursery inviting or in disarray?

Do your youth meet and talk about God and how to live as a Christian in today's world or is youth group just first grade Sunday School with bigger chairs? Is your youth group active in bigger events like District Youth Rallies or Pilgrimage or mission projects within the community?

Those big events will be memory-forming and community-building for newcomers. How is your church taking seriously the call to make discipleship an action word?

## Mission

Most military people were born to serve others. It takes a heart for service to put up with moving around every 3 years, being deployed for 6 months or longer, sleeping in a tent in the middle of a desert, and spending huge chunks of time away from your family. Therefore, we believe service is important to soldiers and families in a way it may not be for the general population.

If churches only pass the collection plate rather than getting their hands dirty in mission to the world, they won't appeal to military families.

What real mission work is available in your community? Having structures like Habitat For Humanity or Interfaith Hospitality Network to plug into as a new family will be important. How does your church

reach out to the least and the lost in your neighborhood?

## Hospitality is key

If we aren't friendly, and genuinely so, people won't come back after one visit to our churches. If we don't begin to think like a visitor and explain things that we do that are particular to our congregation, people will feel like outsiders and not come back. Here is a perfect example from our church, although it is embarrassing. Recently, a military husband came by the office at church to check things out and see what programs we offered.

The senior pastor was on vacation. I, as Associate Pastor, had just left for the hospital to pay a visit. So, the secretary showed the visitor around and told him about the church. She did a fantastic job telling him about programs and opportunities for ministry for his family and giving him a tour of our facilities.

However, she completely forgot to tell him that on fifth Sundays, we only have one service and eat lunch together afterwards. This visitor and his family showed up to locked doors at 8:30 am recently.

Luckily, he was willing to call the church and tell us what happened and gave us a second chance. We may not be so lucky next time.

As a church, we must think like visitors! What rituals do we have that only people within the community know about? Does your church have directional signs for simple things like the restroom? Can someone new find the nursery or the youth Sunday School class easily? How do you relay information? How are people supposed to know what activities are going on a weekly or monthly basis?

See "Be Ready All Churches," page 9

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# DIFFERENT TYPES OF MILITARY PERSONNEL

The Army has two types of people: officers and enlisted personnel. Churches will need a variety of approaches to address their differing needs. Two command structures will move to the Fayetteville area by 2011. The majority will be senior enlisted soldiers and officers of various ranks. These personnel will have secret or top secret clearance and be movers and shakers.

### Enlisted personnel

Within the enlisted population, the lower ranking personnel (E5 and below) tend to live close to the poverty line with some receiving food stamps. These soldiers and their families have little disposable income.

On Post, they can ice skate, swim, or go to the gym for free. So, to engage enlisted families, low cost or free childcare and reasonable prices for church dinners are important.

However, these families may choose to worship on Post. They most likely live there and have only one car.

A good portion of these soldiers will be 24 years of age or younger. They will have a spouse

who does not work or works minimal hours for minimum wage. This family generally has two kids under the age of five with the first being born when the soldier was under 20.

Worshipping on Post will be more convenient and it may be more comfortable to worship there where they are not expected to tithe since that church will be open no matter if people give money or not.

### Non-Commissioned Officers

Senior Non-Commissioned Officers have a different lifestyle and different needs. They are older. They are more likely to live off Post. They have roots in the community simply because they live off Post. Money is less of an issue.



Their kids are generally older and will be in middle school or above. Youth group activities will be important to senior NCOs. Please note that military kids will tend to group together. Other kids will not understand what it is like to have your dad gone for 12-18 months at a time. Other kids won't understand what it is like to move every 3 or 4 years.

If you serve a church in a heavily military area, you might offer programming or

See "Military personnel," page 11

Many soldiers are religious, or at least spiritual, yet most do not attend organized religious services. It's not unusual to see a cross hanging from an armored vehicle or to see a Bible by the bed. Soldiers often wear bandanas with scripture verses printed on them under their helmets. Yet, you won't see a soldier read the Bible much. Is there a stigma about organized religion among soldiers? Is being religious not "cool" or not socially acceptable? Or is the cross tattoo a fashion statement rather than a religious one? Do we need to keep this in mind as we reach out to soldiers and their families?

(Photo by Clint Greer)

# BE READY ALL CHURCHES *continued from page 8*

Word of mouth doesn't cut it with people who are outside the "flock." Do you send email updates and have an informative newsletter?

Examine your worship service and bulletin to see how newcomers might interpret the service or be confused by the bulletin. Do you put page numbers in your bulletin for the things that "everyone" knows?

Everyone does not know the Doxology, especially someone who hasn't been to church in a while or ever, so don't skip those small details that make people feel more comfortable.

Does your church have a brochure that highlights the mission statement, worship times and scheduled activities? Can this brochure be downloaded off the Internet? How can your congregation make it easy for someone who doesn't know the ritual or the people or the typical order of service to feel comfortable when they worship with you?

### Welcoming

Does your church have a method of welcoming people? Do people speak to visitors after the worship service or do we just get mad because the visitors sat in "our" pew?

Does your congregation drop off a small gift to first time visitors? Do you have a coffee hour after your worship service for people to mingle and meet one another in an inviting atmosphere? Is there an informal opportunity for new people to mingle and meet the pastor? Have you asked

new members how they felt when first visiting and brainstormed solutions to issues they might highlight?

### Sunday School and Small Groups

Is Sunday School alive and well in your congregation? Are there small groups that people can join and get to know people and deepen their faith? How do you integrate people into Sunday School or small groups?

No matter if you are 5 or 15 or 55, it is hard to walk into a room of people that know each other and don't know you.

Do you assign Sunday school buddies or have volunteers assigned to invite newcomers to Sunday School and introduce them around? Are you willing to start a new adult Sunday School class to make it more comfortable for new people to get involved?

Do you have a method to educate people about the available Sunday School classes or small groups?

How do people get invited to United Methodist Women or United Methodist Men? Are outsiders welcome? Do the groups meet at times convenient for working people?

### Women's Ministry

Most of the people that will move here for BRAC are high-level personnel. A majority of officers and NCOs will be male and be married.

Some of the support mechanisms we may be used to providing soldiers

and their families like babysitting during long deployment cycles won't matter to the degree they do at a church where you have large numbers of enlisted soldiers attending.

That being said, the type and quality of women's ministry you have WILL be important.

Do you do outings? Do you host movie nights for families? Do your women's groups have events that are easy to join?

Do women invite newcomers to their UMW Circle meetings or are they just for those people who have always been here? Is there a UMW Circle that meets in the evening?

Most of these military wives work, have master's degrees, and the like. These spouses will be great assets to your congregation and women's ministry in particular if they are invited to participate.

### Integrating into the community

Moving is part of the military lifestyle not unlike the lifestyle of United Methodist pastors.

Military families won't need a lot of hand holding to get over the emotional toll of a move. They are used to moving every three years.

However, we think a church can be a helpful place to get acclimated quickly to an area and build a network of friends.

What if each church developed a document that highlighted good doctors, where the good restaurants are,

and tidbits of information like who to call if you need a plumber or an electrician?

A newcomer's guide would be something concrete that would be immensely helpful for anyone moving in, military families included.

Your preschool and afterschool programs will be helpful in getting the children in these families acclimated to their new neighborhood. Where else can you be helpful and invitational to the newcomers?

### Making disciples

We United Methodists in eastern North Carolina have an opportunity to go and make disciples of all the world as 40 thousand members of the world move into our backyard.

With this influx of people, we have the potential to grow like gangbusters if we are willing to ReThink church (to borrow a phrase.).

How will we embrace the opportunity God has given us? How will we look inward to prepare for reaching outside our current congregation?

How will each church have open hearts, open minds, and open doors for our new military neighbors?

\* The Rev. Mary Frances McClure is associate pastor at Salem UMC, Eastover. In 2003, her husband, Sgt. Mark Merryman, followed his childhood dream to serve his country and joined the Army. He completed two tours in Iraq and twice was awarded Purple Hearts for combat injuries. He awaits word on his next deployment.



# REFLECTIONS ON BRAC

A Commentary by the Rev. Woody Wells \*

Recently I was privy to a conversation in which a military spouse commented on a friend whose husband was home on a two-week furlough from Afghanistan.

She said that such furloughs tend to be stressful. She noted how one eagerly anticipates the reunion, making all sorts of plans and irresistibly building up all sorts of expectations.

Though the plans may work out, the accompanying expectations are seldom realistic.

In this instance the Army changed the dates of the furlough three times. Each time the spouse rearranged her work schedule, getting co-workers to

switch days off with her. By the time her husband arrived, half the office staff was put out with her.

That stress perhaps helped to weaken her immune system so that while her husband was home she was sick with a bad cold—there goes the romance!

The children were stressed, having this strange man abruptly reenter their lives, wanting their affection and, at the same time, disciplining them.

For the soldier too, this is a hard readjustment to make, when he is used to barking orders which everyone follows without question.

All too often such furloughs leave

in their wake the unwelcome emotions of relief and sadness. The woman actually said it would be better not to have a furlough at all, just bring the soldier home in a year or so and leave him there.

It is perhaps a bold comparison, but I am reminded of that terrible furlough for Uriah and Bathsheba with all its conflicting loyalties and tragic consequences (2 Samuel 11).

BRAC...we tend to think of how this tidal wave of military personnel and their families will benefit the church—more members, more money—when our Captain wants us to think instead about how we, his Christian soldiers, may be deployed

to help families caught in the crossfires of serial deployments.

We need to get our websites up and running. We need to be welcoming congregations—authentically welcoming, not just certified. We need to offer programs and opportunities which help military families deal with the challenges peculiar to them.

And let us never forget the basic training we all require through faithful preaching of the Gospel.

\* The Rev. Woody Wells is pastor of Haymount UMC in Fayetteville.

## CARING TO REACH OUT

By David Harvin \*

Hay Street UMC in Fayetteville is focused on mission with the military personnel of our community. The church is an event partner with Fayetteville Cares in reaching out to deployed service men and women.

Fayetteville Cares is presenting a community project called Operation Holiday Cheer to send holiday packages to 15,000 Ft. Bragg soldiers and Pope AFB airmen deployed overseas during December 2009.

Operation Holiday Cheer continues the community's long-standing tradition of supporting soldiers and their families. Last year's community event "Boots and Booties: The World's Largest Military Baby Shower" provided gifts of support and thanks to 1000 pregnant military spouses and service members.

The community is undergoing a great change due to the Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC). An influx of new soldiers and their dependents will arrive in the coming years. The only place in the world that will have more top Generals in residence will be the Pentagon.

These new families will need a warm welcome. They will need childcare for their children. They will need youth programs. They will need mother's support groups. They will be looking for places to connect. These young people are Internet savvy; we need to have a great web site to reach them. Hay Street UMC is pledged to reach out.

Learn about supporting deployed soldiers and airmen this Christmas season by visiting [www.fayettevillecares.org](http://www.fayettevillecares.org).

\* The Rev. David Harvin is senior pastor at Hay Street UMC, Fayetteville.

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# IDEAS FOR SUPPORTING MILITARY FAMILIES

UMNS - When the Rev. LeNoir Culbertson became pastor of Madison Street United Methodist Church, near Fort Campbell, Ky., she thought churches probably needed special programs for military families.

Up to one third of the 600 active members of her Clarksville, Tenn., congregation, near the home of the 101st Airborne Division, are related to the military. However, Culbertson said, "I was told repeatedly, 'We don't want to be treated like military.'"

She discovered many needs of a military family with a deployed member are similar to those of single parents. From her experience emerged several ideas for congregations located near military bases.

These hints also are adaptable for churches in ministry with single-parent families.

1. **Provide childcare** for church programs, such as a Bible study or prayer groups. Kerry Mays, whose husband Bryce is deployed

to Iraq, said military families often do not have time to arrange for childcare or other help. "My husband deployed in May, and we found out in April that he was leaving," she said. "With your church family, you don't have to worry that someone will use profanity, or say something you don't want your children to hear."

2. **Offer support groups for military spouses and children.** "You have a spouse you don't know if you'll see again," Mays explained, "and you need someone to talk to, some type of support."

3. **Offer support groups for returning soldiers**, especially those who may be overlooked. Chaplain Lt. Col. Scott Weichl, behavioral health program manager at the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., said he worries about the Reserve and

National Guard soldiers who return to their communities after deployment and do not necessarily have support services available to active duty military.

4. **Collaborate with other organizations.** "Churches could make a tremendous impact on Army Guard and Reserve soldiers," Weichl added. "There is a wonderful opportunity for churches to partner with other organizations or the military."

5. **Assess needs of military families.** Consider setting up zones based on the episcopal structure of the church so there is a church to serve as a resource center about every 20 miles.

6. **Pray for military families**, but do not put them on a special prayer list. That advertises that a spouse—often a woman—and children are living alone.

7. **Keep a list of reliable handy-**

**persons** such as electricians, plumbers, carpenters and mechanics. Many military families "come into town and don't know anyone," Culbertson said.

8. **Remember the spiritual side.** "We try to offer programs and liturgy that are supportive of the military, but not flag waving, not saying everything you do is the will of God," Culbertson suggested.

— Adapted from a UMNS story by Vicki Brown, associate editor and writer, Office of Interpretation, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

## MILITARY PERSONNEL *from page 9*

support geared towards military family's needs.

In these households, the spouse typically works in a mid-level job. S/he may have gone to college while her husband was deployed. However, s/he will not be able to rise in the corporate ladder because she carries the weight of the family during deployments. S/he also will have to move at the Army's command frequently and thus disrupt a career path.

Because of deployments, the spouses who are left behind are very self-sufficient. S/he has the finances, the church involvement, the kids, and the household under control.

The spouse that is gone and then returns has difficulty finding a place in the order. Spouses have the opportunity for support through the Family Readiness Groups through the military.

However, small group Bible studies or United Methodist Women or United Methodist Men could be great places for camaraderie and support as well.

### Officers

Officers have totally different resources and life-experiences. They all have college degrees and so will their spouse in most cases. Officers are often more driven.

They may be frustrated that the church council is closed to them because they haven't been long-time church members. They have traveled more for pleasure along with what

the military has provided.

They tend to have more stable home situations. They are comfortable financially. They will shop for a church by using the Internet.

Officers will have kids in their mid to late twenties and will look for a church that is active and has programs for their kids along with programs for themselves.

They tend to have high expectations and won't settle. They will give a church a chance, but if the church isn't meeting their spiritual, emotional, missional or leadership needs, they will not feel obligated to stay.

They may be looking for a community to settle in after retirement from the military. They will tend to look for more cultured activities.

Church will need to be thought provoking. Questions must be welcomed. Officers study a problem and then implement an action plan. They will be more proactive in the community and look for mission projects and ways to better other people's lives. They are extremely well connected with friends especially over the Internet. Web presence is vital for a church to reach out to and communicate with officers.



### Remembering Veteran's Day

#### Suggested Scripture Readings

Deuteronomy 10:12-13, 17-21:  
What does God require of a nation?

Psalms 2: Warning to rulers of the earth.

Psalms 72: A prayer for justice and righteousness.

Amos 5:11-15: Establish justice.

Galatians 5:13-26: The proper use of freedom.

John 8:31-36: True freedom.

#### In The Book Of Worship:

# 440, A Prayer for Memorial Day

# 495, "A Litany for the Church and for the World"

# 511, "Prayer for God's Reign"

# 513, "Prayer for Justice"

# 515-516, "Prayers for the Nation"

# 517, "A Prayer in a Time of National Crisis"

# 520, "Prayer for Peace"

# 526, "Prayer for the World and Its Peoples"

# 542, "Prayer for Those in Military Service"

#### In The United Methodist Hymnal:

"For Our Country," 429 (prayer)

"For the Healing of the Nations," 428

"Let There Be Peace on Earth," 431

"O God of Every Nation," 435

"This Is My Song," 437

"Battle Hymn of the Republic," 717

Hymns listed under "Peace," pg. 949

### conference CALENDAR

#### November

- 3 Communications Committee, 2pm, UM Building
- 6 World Community Day
- 10 Leadership Academy Days of Learning
- 13-15 Pilgrimage for Youth Groups, Fayetteville, NC
- 14 Conference UMW DO-IT-DAY
- 20-22 UMW Leadership Training
- 26-27 Methodist Building Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday
- 29 UM Student Day

#### December

- 6 World AIDS Day
- 10 Conference Connectional Table, 10am UM Building
- 17 Advocate Advisory Committee, 2pm, UM Building
- 24-25 UM Building closed for Christmas Holiday

NC Conference events are online at [www.nccumc.org/calendar](http://www.nccumc.org/calendar)





By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

## December 6, 2009

**Texts: Ruth 4:13-17, Matthew 1:1-6**  
**"The Lineage of David"**

What skeleton is hiding in your family closet?

Somewhere back there, for most families, there is a shyster or an occasional horse thief.

By and large, these nefarious kin folk are kept out of the limelight. But not so in the Bible!

Matthew gives an ancestral chart for Jesus (Matthew 1:1-17). It is quite a list!

How about Manasseh (v. 10)? He favored human sacrifice and encouraged idolatry among the Hebrew people. How about Rahab (v. 5)? She is often alleged to have been a prostitute.

How about Joram (v. 8)? He was involved in paganism. What about the sons of Josiah (v. 11)? The prophet Jeremiah said no one would mourn their deaths and they would have the burial of a donkey (Jeremiah 22:18-19). Well, you get the idea.

The lineage of the house of David is a mixed bag indeed. Of course, there are genuine and faithful people in the roll call (Josiah, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, for example), but it is clear that the family tree has a few bad apples.

When first I read the texts for this week's lesson, I was surprised to find the story of Ruth. Duh! Here is the

account of an outsider, a Gentile, a Moabite, who is ancestor for the king of Israel: her great-grandson, king David.

It is the same kind of mixed baggage that is described in the opening of the gospel according to Matthew (Matthew 1:5).

Remember that Matthew wrote his gospel account primarily for a Jewish audience. How would they feel when they discover that there is a Gentile in the family of the great king David?

Here is an example of the shock of the biblical revelation: this Jesus who is King of the Jews has come as the Savior of all the world, Jew and Gentile.

I am left to wonder: whom would I omit from the reach of God? Whom would I declare "off limits" to God's purposes? As we move toward Christmas, we get this scriptural reminder that God has used a remarkable range of people—remarkably good and remarkably bad—to surround the story of the Savior.

What, if when we pray "Come, Lord Jesus," the Lord agrees to come, but insists on bringing all his family with him?

### What Someone Else Has Said:

Karl Barth has stated in *The Humanity of God* (John Knox Press): "This much is certain, that we have no theological right to set any sort of limits to the loving kindness of God which has appeared in Jesus Christ. Our theological duty is to see and understands it as being still greater than we had understood."

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Come, Lord Jesus..."

# adult BIBLE STUDY

Based on the scripture lessons of Cokesbury's Adult Bible Studies series.

## December 13, 2009

**Texts: Isaiah 7:13-17, Luke 1:30-38**  
**"Prophets Foreshadow Messiah's Birth"**

Although I have not read it, I have been told about a book entitled *Don't Chase the Skinny Rabbits*.

Perhaps I should get a hold of that book before beginning the work on this week's study texts. There are a lot of rabbits here to chase!

There are issues of translations (Hebrew: "young woman", Greek: "virgin"). There are questions about the promise given to King Ahaz (Isaiah 7:10-14) and how that relates to God's promise to Mary (Luke 1:31). There are matters where biology comes face to face with revelation (Luke 1:34). Then, there is the discussion about God's employment of the lowly (compare Luke 2:24 and Leviticus 12:8) over against God's engagement with the powerful (Isaiah 7:10-14).

As tempting as those topics are, let's focus on how God "calls" Mary. For starters, Mary is not given a choice. The angel does not ask Mary; the angel tells Mary: "You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus" (Luke 1:31).

The beauty of Mary's response (Luke 1:38) is that she accepts this unexpected announcement as a way to be God's servant. No kicking and screaming. No panicked cry of "No, not me!" The truth is that God seldom calls us to do what we can do on our own. God calls us to do what we cannot do on our own.

Did Moses have the power within himself to take on Pharaoh? Did

Abraham and Sarah have it within them to have children (Isaac) when they had been on Medicare for more than a quarter of a century?

Did Paul know how to approach the Christians whom he had been persecuting?

God uses our gifts, to be sure, but God also asks us for mission and ministry beyond our ability.

God has put Mary into the unlikely role of mother of the Messiah. Beyond her expectation. Beyond her understanding. Beyond her experience. But not beyond the power and grace of God.

Try this test on what you understand God to be calling you to do: if it is more than you think you can do on your own, it just might be God's reminder that "Nothing is impossible with God" (Luke 1:37).

### What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Memory and Mission* (Abingdon Press), David Steinmetz has written: "...Mary (is) a signpost pointing away from herself to God's mysterious activity in Jesus Christ."

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Surprising God, You move among us in unexpected ways. Open our hearts to Your unexpected presence..."

## December 20, 2009

**Text: Matthew 1:18-25**  
**"Emmanuel Is Born"**

If this scene described in Matthew 1:18-25 were a movie, most of the time the camera would be focused on Joseph.

Often, we think of these birth narratives to be primarily about Mary, but here is a text that describes Joseph's reactions and actions.

First, Joseph was engaged to Mary (v. 18). It might have been an arrangement between the two families without the young couple really

See "Bible Study," page 13

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# December adult Bible study *continued from page 12*

knowing each other very well.

Nazareth was a small village, so they might have seen each other around, but the social dividing line between male and female was fairly strong. The engagement had legal status.

Second, Joseph wanted to divorce Mary without fanfare (v. 19). Even though the engagement had legal dimensions and was usually dissolved only in court, there was a provision that the engagement could be broken if the man did so in front of two witnesses.

In doing so, Joseph would have lost financially, because he could not then get back the payments he had been making to Mary's family. (The bride was like a possession that could be bought.)

Third, Joseph is told about Mary's pregnancy being the work of the Holy Spirit (v. 20) and about the nature and mission of the child to be born (v. 21).

This message came to Joseph in a dream. It is not the stuff of face-to-face conversation! The name "Jesus" was very common in that culture, so Joseph might have wondered "What's the big deal about the name?"

The angel says, in effect, "In this case, the name is more than a moniker; it is reality."

Fourth, Joseph woke up and followed through on the dream (v. 24). He married Mary, but the two of them showed powerful self-discipline, because they chose not to have sexual intercourse until after the birth of Jesus (v.25).

The neighbors must have wondered what kind of marriage this was because there was a custom of producing evidence (a blood stained sheet) that the bride was a virgin. Joseph did not provide such proof. This probably led to some full-throated gossip.

At each point, Joseph is compassionate and obedient.

That's not a bad context for the birth of the Messiah!

## What Someone Else Has Said:

John Aurelio (*Myth Man*, Crossroad) wrote: "Knowing what he did about Jesus and the scriptures relevant to the Messiah, (Matthew) apparently connected the dots of scriptural passages about the Messiah and drew them into a picture of Jesus' birth."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Thank You for Joseph..."

## December 27, 2009

Text: Matthew 2:7-10, 16-23

## "Magi Confirm Messiah's Birth"

The images from childhood Christmas pageants still shape most of what we recall of the coming of the wise men: cardboard crowns (maybe from Burger King) for each of the three boys chosen to represent the magi; boxes wrapped in gold Christmas paper to stand for the gifts the visitors brought; and a rush to close the play by getting to the manger before the shepherds left.

After all, the cookies and punch would not be served until the final scene was over.

Unfortunately, most of these images do not match the biblical account.

1. There is no reference to kings and crowns; the wise men (or magi) were probably astrologers from what is now Iran.
2. There is no counting of how many wise men there were. The assumption that there were three is because there were three gifts. Two wise men? Eight wise men?
3. And the part of the story not usually told in Sunday School would suggest that the magi

did not get to the manger while the shepherds were there. Herod's murder of the babies younger than two years hints that it might have been close to twenty-four months before the magi made it to Bethlehem.

Much of our memory of this Matthew text comes from singing "We Three Kings," not from the biblical source.

I'm not sure how royal looking these folks would have been after the long trip on camels (or donkeys or horses or feet)!

Why does Matthew give this account? None of the other gospel writers mention it.

Remember that Matthew is writing to a people who are primarily Jewish. And now, into this Jewish story comes a group of Gentiles, even non-believers.

In a gentle way, God has revealed to Matthew (who shares the story) that this Messiah is for all people, not just for the Hebrew people.

In truth, the story of the magi is about radical inclusiveness. I can only wonder how many of Matthew's Jewish readers would have been turned off by this affirmation that the Child born in Bethlehem was Savior of the world. (I can only wonder how often I am turned off by the radical, agape love of God for folks I don't like.)

As the hymn says, "Guide us to the perfect light."

## What Someone Else Has Said:

Chrysostom (quoted in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, Intervarsity Press) has said: "The inn was ordinary. The mother was not celebrated or notable. The star was needed to manifest and illumine the lowly place until they had reached their destination at the manger."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let our prayer begin: "God of the shin-

ing star, lighten my path to the stable made holy by the presence of Your Son..."

## CLASSIFIEDS

**DIRECTOR** of Christian Education/Youth Director - First United Methodist Church in Morehead City is seeking Director of Christian Education/Youth Director. Full-time position. Strong youth leadership skills required. Please e-mail resume to [mhcfumcsec@hotmail.com](mailto:mhcfumcsec@hotmail.com) or call 252-726-7102.

**TRINITY UNITED** Methodist Church in Elizabethtown, NC is seeking to fill a part-time Organist/Pianist position. Interested persons should send a resume to Trinity UMC, PO Box 759, Elizabethtown, NC 28337 or the [trinityumc@embarqmail.com](mailto:trinityumc@embarqmail.com). Questions can be sent to [bplatham1@intrstar.net](mailto:bplatham1@intrstar.net) or call 910-862-3706.

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## Church Mice



Karl Zorowski



1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 calendar  
**ANNOUNCEMENTS**  
 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20

## Preaching Retreat Nov. 16-18

The Fayetteville District is sponsoring "Interpretation and Imagination," a preaching retreat reflecting on the Lectionary Texts for Advent, Nov. 16-18, at Bergland Retreat Center (Camp Rockfish), led by Dr. John K Bergland and Dr. Dennis R. Sheppard. Cost for room and meals is \$180. All materials are included. There will be worship times throughout the retreat with time for reflection and rest. Registrations should be sent to Dr. Dennis R. Sheppard, 4955 Legion Road, Hope Mills, NC 28348. Make checks payable to Hope Mills UMC.

## Finding Jesus on Facebook

The Conference Safe Sanctuaries Committee is sponsoring a series of workshops for adults in ministry among children and youth entitled "Finding Jesus on Facebook." The workshop will address issues of cybersafety as well as ministry among the Internet generation. Participants will receive materials to use in their local churches. There is no cost to attend the workshop although anyone planning to attend should notify Robin Harry (rharry@nccumc.org) about the attendance date and location. The workshop will be held on Saturday mornings from 10 a.m. to 12 noon on Nov. 7 at Haymount UMC in Fayetteville and Nov. 21 at Soapstone UMC in Raleigh. Information and registration details can be found at [www.nccumc.org/children/safe-sanctuaries/](http://www.nccumc.org/children/safe-sanctuaries/).

## Workshop on effective small membership ministry

Hinton Rural Life Center is hosting the workshop, "The Small Membership Church: Keys to Effective Ministry" featuring Ron and Bonnie Crandall and the yet-to-be named executive secretary of Rural/Urban Networks of GBGM.

This event will be Feb. 22-24, 2010. The registration fee for the three-day event is \$125 plus room and board. To see a brochure, go to [http://www.hintoncenter.org/Keys\\_Workshop\\_Brochure.pdf](http://www.hintoncenter.org/Keys_Workshop_Brochure.pdf).

## Leadership in the Small Congregation application deadline is Dec. 15

Applications are now available for the Summer Collegium, a project in support of small congregations at Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Va. Clergy (and their spouses) from 25 small churches of all Christian denominations are invited to spend nine days at Virginia Seminary for encouragement, education, rest and renewal. All expenses, including travel, books, meals, lodging, child care at home and pulpit supply, are paid by a grant from the Lilly Endowment.

The theme of the Summer Collegium this year is Leadership in the Small Congregation. The keynote speaker will be Alice Mann, a prolific writer on congregational ministry, and John Bell from the Iona Community in Scotland will join the conference worship team.

The dates for the Summer Collegium are June 23 - July 1, 2010. Application forms are available at [www.vts.edu/education/collegium](http://www.vts.edu/education/collegium), or will be sent in the mail by e-mailing SummerCollegium@vts.edu or by calling 703-461-1760. Applications must be postmarked by Dec. 15, 2009 to be considered.

## Partner with missionaries through individual Covenant Relationships

Groups or individuals with a passion for a particular country or ministry can partner with UM missionaries through a covenant relationship. More than 300 Global Ministries missionaries, supported through Covenant Relationships, serve in over 60 countries. Through prayers, support and communication with the missionary, a Covenant can become a true partnership. For more information, go to <http://new.gbpm-umc.org/Advance/missionaries/covenant/index.cfm?i=18301>.

## Invitation to All Young Adults

The Conference Young Adult Ministries Team will be meeting on Saturday, Nov. 21 at 10 a.m. at the Methodist Building in Raleigh. Any young adults (age 18-30) are welcome to attend. An emphasis of the meeting will be finding out what local churches are doing in young adult ministries across the Conference and developing ways that information can be shared.

## Children's Ministry Forum

A general church sponsored Children's Ministry Forum will be hosted by Edenton St. UMC in Raleigh on Feb. 23-25, 2010. This is the closest any such opportunity for children's ministry leaders in local churches will ever be to the North Carolina Conference. For details about this opportunity and to registration, visit [www.gbod.org/cmf](http://www.gbod.org/cmf).

## Mini-conferences on immigration

The North Carolina Council of Churches is sponsoring free informative mini-conferences about how immigration is affecting North Carolina. All are invited to attend one of the following: Nov. 7, 9:30 a.m. - noon at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Greenville; or Nov. 14, 9:30 a.m. - noon at Congregational United Church of Christ in Greensboro. For more information and to RSVP, go to <http://www.welcometheimmigrant.org>.

## Two types of grants available for Older Adult Ministry

The United Methodist Committee on Older Adult Ministries is providing two kinds of grants: Intergenerational Ministry grants and Caregiving Ministry grants during the 2009-2012 quadrennium.

These grants, part of the Comprehensive Plan for Older Adult Ministries, are available to local United Methodist congregations, districts, annual conferences, central conferences, and United Methodist-related institutions. All grant applications will be reviewed and recipients selected by the UM Committee on Older Adult Ministries. The following procedures and timelines have been determined by the committee:

### **Intergenerational Ministry with older adults**

- ♦ Jan. 15, 2010 - Submission deadline. Applications available, both in print form and on the website [www.aging-umc.org](http://www.aging-umc.org).
- ♦ Fall 2010 - Grant funds are awarded.

### **Caregiving Ministry with older adults**

- ♦ August 2010 - Applications available, both in print form and on the website [www.aging-umc.org](http://www.aging-umc.org).
- ♦ Jan. 15, 2011 - Submission deadline. Fall 2011 - Grant funds awarded.

For more information or to request printed applications, contact:

Center on Aging & Older Adult Ministries—GBOD, PO Box 340003 — Nashville, TN 37203-0003. Telephone: 615-340-7177 or Toll free: 1-877-899-2780 ext. 7177. Email: [tkline@gbod.org](mailto:tkline@gbod.org) Website: [www.aging-umc.org](http://www.aging-umc.org)

## Final gathering for Local Pastors and Associate Members Nov. 21

The Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members has planned informative meetings of encouragement and fellowship with Bishop Al Gwinn. These will be times to have questions answered concerning ministry, and a time of sharing with each other.

Bishop Gwinn will hold the final of three meetings on Nov. 21 - Stonewall UMC (New Bern District). The meeting begins at 10 a.m. and ends at 12:30 p.m., with a break for refreshments. For additional information, contact Margaret Hockett at [mhockett@nccumc.org](mailto:mhockett@nccumc.org) or 910-791-4092.



# around the CONFERENCE



## First UMC, Cary - Supporting Louisburg College

On a recent visit to First UMC, Cary, Dr. Mark D. LaBranche (left), president of Louisburg College, received funds for a window in memory of Charles "Nick" Pleasants. During the church services, another \$4,500 gift for the Raleigh District UM Men's Windows for Education projects was presented. The program continues to raise funds to restore windows on the Louisburg campus. Gifts may be sent payable to Louisburg College with Windows for Education on the memo line. Mail gifts to the college at 501 N. Main St., Louisburg, NC 27549. LaBranche preached in the morning worship services and visited the Young Men's Bible Class where the Windows for Education program was launched in 2006. Mike Bailey (right), the church's UMM president, presented a \$1,000 check for Louisburg's scholarship fund. Each year the UMM donate a scholarship to one of the three colleges in the NC Conference in honor of First UMC's music director, David Marlette, and his wife, Phyllis.



## Cedar Grove UMC, Pittsboro - Restroom Update

Cedar Grove UMC recently dedicated new restrooms located in the Fellowship Hall which were updated to meet Americans with Disabilities Act standards. A plaque citing those responsible for the successful project completion is held by (L-R) Elbridge Atwater, immediate past chair of the Board of Trustees, and the Rev. Patrick Sinclair, pastor. Contributors to the success of the project include the North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, the Duke Endowment, former Cedar Grove minister Patricia Sykes, anonymous donors, architect John W. Lindsey, and builder James Arndt.



## St. Paul UMC, Rocky Mount - Dresses for Haiti

The Ruth Goldston/Gloria Hemmerle Circle of St. Paul UMC, Rocky Mount, recently made and donated 100 dresses for the School for Girls in Haiti. The dresses were sewn by Gloria Hemmerle, Irene Moody, Neta Wood, and Liz Stancil. Also pictured above are Elizabeth Hearn and Dr. Marty Cauley, pastor.

# DEATHS

**MORTON, Dean** (Wilmington: retired) died Sept. 12. A celebration of life ceremony was held Sept. 18 at Pine Valley UMC.

**THOMPSON, Roger F.** (Rockingham: Ledbetter) died Sept. 25. A service of celebration was held Sept. 28 at Ledbetter UMC.

**FORBES, Louise Stallings Dawson,** widow of the Rev. Dan Forbes, died Sept. 25. A service of remembrance was held Sept. 27 in La Grange.

**McCARVER, Clyde G.,** (Rockingham: retired) died Sept. 29. The funeral was Oct. 3 at Saint Luke UMC in Hartsville, SC.

**LEE, Mildred Murrie,** widow of the Rev. Allen C. Lee, died Oct. 6. A memorial service, in celebration of her life, was held Oct. 18 at Trinity UMC in Red Springs.

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# New London UMC volunteers bring the Word through DBOM

By Barbara Geiger \*

Last spring, the Rev. Troy Allen of New London UMC, in New London, presented 24 graduates of Disciple I and Disciple IV Bible Studies with their certification of completion. The graduates participated through the Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries program (DBOM) offered at Southern Correctional Institution for Women, located in Troy.

At the graduation, Allen spoke about the past, present, and the future of Outreach Ministry. Disciple Studies are in 56 North Carolina correctional facilities including the women's prison in Raleigh. More than 300 lay and clergy persons have been trained as prison volunteers since DBOM was created in 1995.

The graduates from both Disciple I and IV shared thoughts on the knowledge they've gained through their Disciple experience, what new information was uniquely presented, what most enlightened them in the 32 weeks of study, and what would make them better followers of Christ. A deeper understanding of the Word was voiced by many graduates. Participants also

shared that they had formed a trust in their groups and that because of this they were able to openly express themselves and grow spiritually.

Of special meaning for several graduates in the Disciple IV class came through a renewing of friendships formed when they shared previous Disciple studies in Raleigh. Arrangements are made, through local churches offering Disciple Bible studies, for the continuation of Disciple program for the participants when they are transferred to one of the four honor camps in the state.

At the graduation, the introduction of lay leaders Suzie Martin and Jackie Smith by Allen was followed by presentation of "Christian Love Pillows." The pillows were crocheted by class members with the leaders' initials and the United Methodist cross and flame symbol. Following the ceremony, members of New London UMC provided a buffet that was enjoyed by all attendees.

During the study year, Disciple IV lay leader Suzie Martin asked the ladies who were studying "Under the Tree of Life" to write down their own personal thoughts and original writings on various themes.



Pictured above are some of the recent graduates of year-long Disciple studies and lay and clergy who led the classes at the Southern Correctional Institution for Women.

As the study covered Psalms and Proverbs, participants were challenged to write from their hearts and personal experiences. Martin asked them to compose a psalm of praise, a psalm of lament, a litany, a creed/belief and an obituary of Jesus. Some also submitted original poetry and drawings.

On the last day of Disciple IV study, Martin presented each participant with a bound notebook collection of their writings. Uncontrolled tears were observed all around the table as each of participant shared their contributions. The books offer class members a reminder of not only what they wrote but of memories of

their sisters in Christ.

The Chaplaincy department and the graduates expressed gratitude to the DBOM and to the members of New London UMC for the program. Allen brought Disciple Studies and the involvement of New London members to the institution. Southern Correctional senior Chaplain Priscilla Durkin and volunteer Chaplain Michele Perry participated in Disciple IV. Bishop A. Simpson, another Chaplain at Southern Correctional Institution, was a participant in the Disciple I program.

\* Barbara Geiger is a recent graduate of the Disciple IV study.

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## Junaluska hosts Native American Women's Conference

Women from more than 10 tribes from Maryland to Florida made history when they attended the first Native American Women's Conference ever held at Lake Junaluska. The gathering was hosted Oct. 16-18 by SEJANAM, the Southeastern Jurisdictional Association for Native American Ministries and Lake Junaluska.

Designed to serve as a tool in raising awareness on issues and needs of Native American women, the theme of the event was "Re-Defining

See "Native American," page 5



James A. Gray III, with right hand raised and left hand on a Bible held by his wife, Beth Gray, was sworn in Oct. 23 as NC Wesleyan College's sixth president. Behind the podium is Vel H. Johnson, Board of Trustees chair, who presided during the inauguration. Standing to the far left is Major Todd Jackson, the ROTC representative on the NC Wesleyan campus.

## NC Wesleyan College holds inauguration

By Susan Best \*

James A. Gray III, a native of Winston-Salem and a veteran fundraiser and communicator, was inaugurated as North Carolina Wesleyan College's sixth president on Friday, Oct. 23, during Homecoming Weekend. Gray had assumed his role as president of the Rocky Mount school on June 1.

He brings to Wesleyan more than a decade of experience in higher education administration and fundraising, as well as a career in international business, communications and public relations that spans more than 20 years.

Most recently Gray served the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as associate dean for external affairs of the Kenan-Flagler Business School. Before that, he was associate dean for marketing and communications at Duke University's Fuqua School of Business.

Prior to returning to his native North Carolina, Gray served for eight years in top management positions in New York. He was president of U.S. Operations for London-based Citigate Communications. He also served as president of public relations for Brouillard Communications in New York, the corporate division

of J. Walter Thompson, and president of Manning, Selvage & Lee/U.S., the ninth largest public relations agency in the world.

A University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill graduate and Morehead-Cain Scholar, Gray launched his

career in communications in his native Winston-Salem before spending 20 years in communications and public relations management positions in Atlanta.

See "Wesleyan Inauguration," page 3



Suanne Ware-Diaz

## Writing on the walls

Excitement was in the air as the dream of the new North Carolina Annual Conference headquarters in Garner continues to take form and to show evidence of the abundant blessings given to the conference.

With the walls raised, all clergy and laity were invited to join in prayer for the ministry which will take place in the building. Approximately 30 people attended the event and were invited to record scripture and prayer on the interior walls of the building.

Those who were unable to attend sent prayers and scripture through email to be recorded on their behalf.

Welcoming remarks were provided by Cashar Evans, conference Trustees chair, a time of devotion and prayer was led by Bishop Al Gwinn, and instructions for recording messages and safety issues were given by Christine Dodson, conference treasurer and business manager.

A photo gallery of the construction progress is maintained on the conference website at <http://nccumc.org/treasurer/ncc-builds/>.



Cashar Evans records a prayer submitted by email. (Photo by Derek Leek)





## Navy's USS New York becomes a symbol of healing

In November, the amphibious transport dock ship USS New York transited New York Harbor past the Statue of Liberty on her way to commissioning.

Command Chaplain Laura Bender, a United Methodist serving aboard the USS New York said that the ship is a symbol of healing.

"All week long, the whole crew has

been hearing these stories," she says. "Everybody who comes on board has a story to tell." The ship's motto is "Never Forget."

The 684-foot long vessel has 7.5 tons of steel recovered from the World Trade Center welded into the bow. Under construction near New Orleans when Hurricane Katrina hit, the USS New York escaped serious

damage from the storm.

Bender, the ship's chaplain, coordinated the activities surrounding the commissioning. The crew includes more than 360 service personnel. Its home port is now Norfolk, VA.


For the ship's chapel, Bender had three symbols made using Twin Towers steel: a Christian cross, Jewish star of David and the Islamic

crescent. She thinks the Navy's new motto, "A Global Force for Good," ties in with the spirit of healing and reflects the many humanitarian missions the Navy performs.

"Nobody wants peace more than the people who serve," Bender says.




*(Photo above left by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Eric M. Durie, U.S. Navy; photo above right by Linda Bloom)*

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## Methodists, Catholics, Lutherans celebrate milestone agreement

By David Briggs \*

Justification by faith.

Those three words divided Western Christianity for centuries, splitting apart families and nations. Wars were fought over their meaning.

So it is with a sense of awe and wonder that representatives of three major Christian traditions – Methodism, Lutheranism and Catholicism – gathered recently to celebrate their fundamental agreement on how sinful human beings are forgiven and brought into a right relationship with God.

The celebration marked the 10th anniversary of the original agreement between the Lutheran and Catholic churches. The World Methodist Council joined the agreement in 2006.

Side by side, speaking in an age when some would dismiss religion as a source of violence and division, Bishop Gregory Palmer, president of the United Methodist Council of Bishops, Cardinal Francis George, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Bishop Mark Hanson, president of the Lutheran World Federation, joined other international dignitaries and faithful in a service of thanksgiving celebrating their common Christianity. Bishop Sharon Zimmerman Rader, ecumenical officer for the United Methodist bishops, also attended.

How big a deal is this in the grand sweep of Christian history?

"It's of enormous importance because it is the first point of conflict of the unfolding of the breakup of the Western church," says the Rev. James Massa, executive director of the Secretariat of Ecumenical and

See "Denominations agree," page 6



## New African American heritage center hosts training

By Leoneda Inge \*

African Americans have had a presence in Methodism since its inception in the 1700s. For three days in October, that history was on display to celebrate and inspire members of the Southeastern Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church.

In this first official event spearheaded by the new African American Methodist Heritage Center (AAMHC), workshop participants learned how to preserve their local church history.

More than 60 participants attended workshops titled: "How to Research African American Methodist History;" "How to Preserve Local Church History," and "How to Promote and Involve the Local Church in Its Heritage."

The event was in partnership with Gammon Theological Seminary in Atlanta and the General Board of Church and Society of The United Methodist Church.

"We don't have to sit back and talk about the white church – you were there from the beginning," Dr. William McClain preached during a morning plenary session. McClain went on to tell workshop participants, African Americans have remained in the Methodist church to "claim our own history and heritage."

Dr. Robert Williams is General Secretary of the General Commission on Archives and History of The United Methodist Church. Williams surprised the crowd during the workshop when he said there were more than 8,000 photographs of African American life in Methodist history in the church archives.

Williams said, telling local stories and capturing local history is essential to preservation. "Don't be a chameleon church with no identity

of its own," said Williams.

Workshop participants were taught how to get started in their quest to research and archive artifacts and memorabilia. Dr. Rosetta Ross, an associate professor of Religious Studies at Spellman College in Atlanta, reminded participants to recover letters from older church members and obituaries to help make historic connections.

Nancy Watkins, former assistant archivist at Emory University in Atlanta, said to "beware of humidity," and to archive special photographs, letters, and other records in acid-free boxes, kept where temperatures are stable, with little sunlight.

The AAMHC will be housed at the General Church Archives Center on the campus of Drew University in Madison, NJ. The AAMHC will receive \$100,000 a year for a four year period (2008-2012).

Retired Bishop Forrest Stith, who was instrumental in petitioning the General Conference of The United Methodist Church for support and recognition, said to participants, "History and identity go hand-in-hand... African Americans suffer from an identity crisis and we need to remember who we are and whose we are."

To celebrate the opening of the AAMHC, Gammon was presented with an original, textile wall hanging by artist Patricia Jackson. The piece depicts African American clergy flanked with the words – History, Ethics, Theology and Philosophy. It will hang in the school's chapel.

The workshop culminated with participants attending early service at Central UMC in Atlanta – whose history goes back to the 1860s.

*\* Leoneda Inge attended the Heritage Center workshop and is a member of Asbury Temple UMC, Durham.*

## Wesleyan inauguration *from page 1*

Vel Johnson, vice chairman of Wesleyan's board of trustees and chairman of the presidential search committee, said, "We are delighted to have Jim Gray join us at Wesleyan. He has proven leadership and fundraising skills and has already generated enormous energy and enthusiasm among those who have met him."

Gray comes to Wesleyan with additional praise from others who know his abilities well. Among them is Dr. Michael L. Lomax, president and CEO of the United Negro College Fund and former president of Dillard University. Lomax spoke at

Gray's inauguration, recognizing his foresight and leadership, and praising him for his personal commitment to citizenship, diversity and community-building efforts.

Gray served on the board of directors of a number of community-improvement organizations in Atlanta, New York and NC. He also has been active as a member of The United Methodist Church and is a member of University UMC in Chapel Hill and Duke Chapel in Durham.

*\* Susan Best is Director of Public Relations for North Carolina Wesleyan College.*

## Deadline approaches for submitting legislation to the upcoming 2010 Global Young People's Convocation

The deadline for submitting legislation to the Global Young People's Convocation and Legislative Assembly in Berlin, Germany is Dec. 31. The event is July 21-26, 2010, but it's already crunch time, said Elizabeth-Ann Rowleson, coordinator of the event for Young People's Ministries, a division of the United Methodist Board of Discipleship.

Any young person, young people from a local church, district, or jurisdiction/central conference can propose legislation to be considered during the Legislative Assembly. Guidelines for legislation and general information about the convocation and how to support it can be found at [www.globalyoungpeople.org](http://www.globalyoungpeople.org). The event will be viewable online for those unable to attend.

Young People's Ministries (YPM), an initiative of The United Methodist Church, sponsors the convocation. The focus of the ministry is to bring young people closer to the church and to God. YPM helps youth and young adults become strong spiritual leaders in their congregations; advocates for the concerns of young people around the world; helps young people work as agents of peace, justice and mercy; and helps the church embrace God's call on the lives of young people.

Resources offered through the ministry include a Young Adult Network – an online forum to explore, discuss, and connect, Devo Direct – twice weekly devotionals delivered to cell phones, grants and scholarships, and US-based youth gatherings.

YPM works with youth (people 12-18 years old), young adults (people ages 18-30 in the US and 18-40 outside of the US), as well as with adults who work with young people.

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# Judicial Council considers 21 docket items in Durham meeting

By Linda Bloom\*

Local United Methodist churches cannot arbitrarily choose which general church programs to support financially, according to the church's top court.

The Judicial Council upheld the decision by Bishop Larry Goodpaster that the Western North Carolina Annual (regional) Conference's "Choice Empowerment" plan is a violation of Paragraph 247.14 of the United Methodist *Book of Discipline*.

That case was one of 21 docket items considered by the nine-member council when it met Oct. 27-31. Among other issues, the council addressed questions on the participation of retired clergy in local churches, pension and health insurance plans and representation to the church's legislative body.

The Choice Empowerment plan essentially gives churches permission not to pay what is requested of them, the council's decision said.

The bishop had noted a "substantial decline in connectional support" during the five years the plan has been in effect.

"One of the basic principles of The United Methodist Church's connectional system is to provide ministries and outreach in ways and places that individual churches are not able to do alone," the council pointed out. "This philosophy is built upon a belief in shared responsibility for the extension of mission and ministry of the whole church to the world."

Payment in full of these apportionments "is the first benevolent responsibility of the church," the decision said.

## Oral hearing

How clergy participate in local churches after retirement was addressed during the council's Oct. 29 oral hearing. The clergy executive session of the Eastern Pennsylvania Annual (regional) Conference had



Judicial Council members Belton Joyner (left) and Susan Henry-Crowe participate in an oral hearing. (Photo by Taylor Mills)

asked for a decision on whether a retired elder could serve as chairperson of a local church committee on finance. Such a position is usually held by a lay member.

The case affects the Rev. Stanley Menking, a member of Mt. Pocono UMC in PA, who argued before the council that the *Discipline* allows retired clergy the same privileges as other members of the local charge conference.

If bishops are able to deny them such opportunities for service, "countless congregations" would be denied the chance "to benefit from the experience, talents, gifts and graces gained from the years of faithful service of the 16,000 retired elders in The United Methodist Church," he said.

The council agreed that a retired elder can serve as chairperson of the local church committee on finance. In a dissenting opinion, Jon R. Gray said the council had no jurisdiction in the matter because it was a policy issue.

## Retirement issues

In a separate case involving retired clergy, the Judicial Council agreed with California-Nevada Conference

Bishop Warner H. Brown, Jr. that the conference is entitled to set the rate it pays for retired clergy, as long as it does not cut compensation.

In a brief, the United Methodist Board of Pension and Health Benefits argued that the church mandated an automatic two percent increase in payment through its Clergy Retirement Security Program.

The council decided, however, that the conference can either retain the same "past-service annuity rate" for retired clergy from one year to the next or increase it without restriction.

In a concurring opinion, Ruben T. Reyes said the decision was a "plain and simple" issue. "The bottom line is that the yearly option to retain the same rate or hike it belongs to each annual conference," he wrote.

## Other rulings

In other business, the Judicial Council:

- ♦ Ruled the secretary of the General Conference has the authority to determine the number of delegates that each annual and

See "Judicial Council," page 5

## North Carolina connections with Judicial Council

By Taylor Mills \*

The Judicial Council of The United Methodist Church met from Oct. 28-31 at the Courtyard by Marriott hotel in Durham.

The nine-member body includes the Rev. Dr. F. Belton Joyner, Jr. of The North Carolina Annual Conference who serves as Council Secretary.

This was the first meeting of the Council within the bounds of the North Carolina Annual Conference in over 25 years.

One evening, the Council members were the guests of Bishop Al Gwinn and the Cabinet of the North Carolina Annual Conference for dinner at Papa's Grill, a local restaurant near the hotel.

While in Durham, the Council considered 21 docket items, two of which were open to the public for oral arguments.

The Council tries to meet in a city with a United Methodist-related seminary or divinity school nearby so as be accessible to students who would like to learn about their work and process.

Joyner is the first member of the North Carolina Conference to sit on the Judicial Council since W. Lemuel Clegg in 1961.

\* The Rev. Taylor Mills is pastor of Avent Ferry UMC in Raleigh and chair of the conference Communications Committee.



## Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Submissions are welcome. Letters should be a maximum of 250 words, contain the writer's name, address, church, and phone number, and must be received by the 5th of the month prior to publication. The Editor reserves the right to determine if a letter will be published.

Letters attacking individuals or groups or containing offensive language, violating privacy, infringing on

confidentiality or those affecting appointability, will not be published.

Send submissions electronically in MS Word format to [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org).

Views expressed in letters to the editor are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the editor, Advocate staff, the Advocate Advisory Committee, or the North Carolina Conference.

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**Contact:** [bnorton@nccumc.org](mailto:bnorton@nccumc.org) or (919) 832-9560 with any questions.



## Scarritt-Bennett Center to host civil rights conference

The first annual Elders for Today conference will be held in Nashville, TN, Jan. 5-8, 2010 on Scarritt-Bennett's historic campus. The conference will bring together people who experienced the Civil Rights era of the 1960s and those interested in learning about the era. Participants will gain a historical perspective of the movement through a variety of creative methods of sharing individual memories and experiences including music, writing, technology and art. Discussions will focus on how the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s continues to impact America today. For information on costs and to download the registration form online, visit [www.scarrittbennett.com](http://www.scarrittbennett.com), or call (615) 340-7557. The deadline to register is Dec. 21, 2009.

## CJAMM seeks information about prison ministries

The NC Conference Committee on Criminal Justice and Mercy Ministries (CJAMM) celebrates the many Methodist volunteers throughout the NC Conference who are following the Wesleyan tradition by answering the call to prison ministry. To highlight these congregations, the CJAMM committee has provided a feedback form on the conference website, where persons may easily describe how churches and church members are involved in prison ministry.

Click on CJAMM Feedback or go to the CJAMM web site at [www.nccumc.org/cjamm](http://www.nccumc.org/cjamm) and look for the "Tell us about your church's prison ministry" page indexed on the left side of the main page. Please contact Linda Harris, [leeharris@nccumc.org](mailto:leeharris@nccumc.org) with any questions.

## Native American women's conference held *continued from page 1*

Our Place: Native Women Speak!" In addition, the event provided for spiritual broadening and understanding. "We celebrate this coming together in so many ways, the gathering of nations, the sharing, and the bringing together of generations of our people," said Darlene Jacobs, director of SEJANAM.

Kicking off the event was the Rev. Cynthia Abrams, a member of the Seneca tribe and director for the Alcohol, Other Addictions, and Health Care programs for the General Board of Church and Society. The keynote speaker was the Rt. Rev. Carol Gallagher, a member of the Cherokee nation. Gallagher is the first indigenous woman bishop in the worldwide Anglican Communion.

Gallagher shared stories encouraged some 110 Native American women to continue moving forward, sharing their history and traditions, and persevering despite obstacles.

The conference included workshops on the psychology of cancer, domestic violence against women and children, historical grief and trauma, substance abuse among women, disaster preparedness, women empowerment, tobacco use and HIV/STD. Attendees also had the chance to participate in wellness opportunities and a visit a

wellness room.

Suanne Ware-Diaz, GCORR, and Cynthia Abrams, GBCS, both offered workshops. Also presenting was Jane Ehrman, a leading national speaker and author with the Cleveland Clinic Wellness Institute speaking on the realm of psychology and cancer.

The conference ended with a dinner to honor the national native women leaders within The United Methodist Church.

Among those recognized for service to their communities, annual conferences, Native Ministries and to the Church were Mable Cummings, Daphne Strickland, Connie Locklear and Darlene Jacobs, all from the NC Conference.

"I believe that our native women left the conference with strengthened skills on personal safety, security, health and wellness, clearer personal tools for dealing with social and cultural issues unique to the Native American community and deepened relationships with the risen Christ and with each other," stated Jacobs, Director for Native American Ministries.

SEJANAM is the advocate for 23 Native American congregations and three other ministries in the Southeast Jurisdiction.

## Fall brings record enrollment at Methodist University

Methodist University experienced a significant growth this fall in its new-student and day program enrollment. The freshman class grew from its previous all-time high of 431 to 469 students.

Of the 469 enrolled freshmen, 31 percent are Presidential Scholars with an average grade point average (GPA) of 3.79 and an average SAT score of 1112. Recipients of this honor are eligible for renewable scholarships ranging from \$5,750 to \$17,500 per year for up to four years.

"Seventy-five of the 469 new students this year are from Cumberland County, which is the largest new-student attendance we have ever had from within the county," said Rick Lowe, vice-president for Enrollment Services.

Day program enrollment, according to Michael Hadley, assistant dean for Institutional Research and Effectiveness, is at a record high—up three percent from 1,603 last fall to 1,657 this fall. "We have also experienced a 26 percent increase in our graduate enrollment, increasing from 145 students last year to 182 students this year," said Hadley.

## Treasurer's Office seeks financial leadership best practices

The Conference Treasurer's Office is seeking input for a guidance document to be shared with local churches on proven best practices for financial leadership in these tough economic times.

Examples may include, but are not limited to, ideas for creative ways to save funding or cut expenses, successful ways churches have increased givings and donations, and ways churches have found to communicate financial information effectively. Many are experiencing difficulty in these lean economic times and the conference would like to provide a forum for sharing ideas and experiences with others.

Send ideas, experiences and stories to [helpdesk@nccumc.org](mailto:helpdesk@nccumc.org). They will be posted on the Treasurer's Office website and the results shared in a compiled, written format. If a church can share ideas but prefers not to be identified by name, please note that in your request.

## Judicial Council *continued from page 4*

missionary conference will elect to the General Conference within the provisions of the Constitution and the legislative enactments of the General Conference.

- ♦ Affirmed the ruling of Bishop Jonathan Keaton that a request for a decision of law in the Detroit Annual Conference regarding identifying local church membership in the Reconciling Ministries Network was "moot, hypothetical and improper."
- ♦ Found that the Louisiana Annual Conference did not violate the Discipline by establishing clergy compensation before knowing the cost of health insurance premiums because such a cost is a benefit, not compensation.
- ♦ Upheld a decision by Bishop Mary Ann Swenson regarding implementation of the California-Pacific Conference's Annual Conference's Clergy Benefit Charge to cover the costs of the health premiums for retired and incapacitated clergy.
- ♦ There is an official position in

The United Methodist Church on gay and lesbian sexuality, and that states the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. The Judicial Council, the denomination's highest court, in a ruling released Nov. 2 said that the Baltimore-Washington Annual (regional) Conference went too far in adopting its own statement declaring "a more authentic and truthful representation of The United Methodist Church" is that "we disagree" on gay and lesbian issues. "The effect of the Baltimore-Washington resolution is to negate the church's clearly stated position as reflected in current disciplinary language," the council wrote.

The full decisions from the Judicial Council's October meeting, Decisions 1120 to 1141, are posted week at [http://archives.umc.org/interior\\_judicial.asp?mid=263](http://archives.umc.org/interior_judicial.asp?mid=263).

\* Linda Bloom is a United Methodist News Service news writer based in New York.



# Denominations celebrate consensus *from page 2*

Interreligious Affairs of the Catholic conference. "It's of enormous importance for all of the traditions within Christianity that have their roots in the Western church."

## Sound and fury

In the early days of the Reformation, when condemnations and anathemas flew back and forth between Protestants and Catholics, and often within Protestantism itself, the term "justification by faith" often came to be seen as a battle cry in a theological debate over salvation.

Lutherans and Reformed traditions would emphasize that sinful human beings were forgiven and brought into a right relationship with God through no merit of their own. Catholics would emphasize the free will of human beings to accept or reject God's gift, and the importance of the church community in helping individuals stay on the right path.

When Methodism founder John Wesley came along in the 18th century, he would take points of emphases from both Lutheran and Catholic teachings.

"The grace or love of God, whence cometh our salvation, is free in all and free for all. ...It does not depend on any power or merit in man," Wesley said.

But he also taught that human beings have a continuing responsibility to accept God's grace, and to show its fruit in works of piety and mercy.

A one-time conversion experience does not guarantee a person a place in heaven, according to Wesley.

"Wesley believed you could lose your salvation," says the Rev. Arthur Dickens Thomas Jr., pastor of Messiah UMC in Taneytown, Md., and professor of Christian spirituality at the Ecumenical Institute of Theology, St. Mary's Seminary, in Baltimore. "It is very important to show forth works of faith and repentance."

Catholics and Lutherans began dialogue on justification by faith in the 1960s, prompted in part by the Second Vatican Council opening the windows of the Catholic Church to the world. In this new age of ecumenism,

Christian groups that before would stand on faith or Scripture alone, or place special value on tradition or free will, began to reach consensus on how each plays a role in their theology.

On Oct. 31, 1999, after nearly 35 years of dialogue, the Vatican and the Lutheran World

Federation reached agreement on the doctrine of justification, voiding standing condemnations dating back to the 16th century.

The agreement states: "Together we confess: By grace alone, in faith in Christ's saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good works."

The hope was other Christian traditions would join this historic pact.

One stepped forward.

## A Methodist 'touchdown'

The World Methodist Council, which in 1999 expressed joy at the Lutheran-Catholic pact, accepted an invitation from the two partners to join in the agreement. In 2002, United Methodist Bishop Walter Klaiber of Germany and the Rev.



Sunitha Mathew, 33, considers people who believe in Christ to be Christians. UMNS photos by Ronny Perry.

Geoffrey Wainwright, a British Methodist and professor of Christian theology at Duke Divinity School, began drafting a statement.

The statement declaring the council's fundamental doctrinal agreement with the Catholic-Lutheran document on justification by faith was circulated twice to all member churches, including The United Methodist Church. The statement was signed by Catholic, Lutheran and Methodist representatives July 23, 2006, at a meeting of the World Methodist Council in Seoul.

In their common affirmation, Methodists, Catholics and Lutherans said they viewed the agreement as a sign of their desire for a "common witness to the world, which is the will of Christ for all Christians."

A standing ovation greeted the agreement, and participants spontaneously began singing, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

Ecumenical observers say it is difficult to understate the Methodist contribution, both in giving new life to the ecumenical movement and in widening the dialogue to include a perspective that appreciates both the unmerited gift of God's love and human responsibility to respond to the divine gift.

"I think it's extraordinary that it has happened," says the Rev. William MacDonald, a United Methodist minister who serves St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Vonore, Tenn. "With Methodists joining on, I think that just re-energized the issues."

He uses a sports analogy to illustrate how Methodists bring together Protestant thinking on justification and Catholic ideas of holiness.

"If you want to do an end run around the Reformation," he says, "you end up at United Methodism for a touchdown."

The Rev. Donald McCoid, ecumenical officer for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and Massa say Methodist teaching on social holiness enriches their traditions. "The wonderful contribution of Methodism is how the spirit works in our life," McCoid says.

In one sense, Massa says, Methodists challenge Christians to consider "how do we move from justification to justice."

## Embracing one another

Few United Methodists today would be able to define the doctrine of justification by faith.

But ask them about the heart of the matter – that Lutherans, United Methodists and Catholics celebrate one another as fellow Christians – and many, particularly among the younger generation, are ahead of the theologians and church leaders.

In a recent visit to Hillcrest UMC in Nashville, Tenn., a UMNS team found the Methodist - Lutheran - Catholic agreement warmly embraced.

William Ryan, 71, remembers a time when Lutherans, Catholics and United Methodists looked at each other skeptically. "They didn't know what the beliefs were of other churches," he says. "As time has progressed, they have come to know each other, come to love each other."

Younger churchgoers like Nikki Rhoads, 31, say they see their Catholic and Lutheran friends "as just Christians." What would Jesus do? "He'd want us all to love each other," Rhoads says.

Sunitha Mathew, 33, says she considers people Christians as long as they believe in Christ.

"Maybe the newer generation is a little more accepting than probably my parents and grandparents," she says. "So hopefully the new generation will rise up and say, 'See, believing in Christ is more important ... than how you do things in church.'"

The Rev. Niger Woodruff, 31, a student at Vanderbilt Divinity School, says the agreement is "a loving act" by the three traditions.

"Our founder in Methodism, John Wesley, firmly believed in unity in the essentials and love in everything else. In that sense, the love is extended in the unity of our traditions," Woodruff says.

Wainwright agrees. "We believe in a gospel of reconciliation," he says. "We have to be reconciled among ourselves if we are to be a convincing witness to the world."

\* David Briggs is news editor of United Methodist News Service.

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*A place  
of hope arises  
out of disaster*

By Winkie Lee \*

As the NC Conference director of Disaster Recovery Ministries, Barbara Tripp was paying attention to Hurricane Floyd during the summer of 1999, but there didn't seem to be much reason to worry. Floyd made its appearance and was followed by beautiful blue skies.

Then everything changed.

One of the biggest disasters eastern North Carolina has faced was not because of the hurricane itself, but because of the flooding from the 19 inches of rain that followed, Tripp said.

As the rain continued, "the rivers rose and rose and rose," said the Rev. Carol Goehring, executive director of connectional ministries for the North Carolina Conference. Goehring lived in New Bern during the storm. "It was incredibly widespread."

Some of that rain hit ground that had already been saturated by Hurricane Dennis. The rain flooded areas not considered to be flood plains.

In North Carolina, Floyd caused 35 deaths, flooded 19,000 square miles, damaged 56,000 homes and destroyed 7,000 others. Damages totaled \$3,000,000,000, and there were \$800,000,000 in agricultural losses.

"The flooding was so extensive that UMCOR (the United Methodist Committee on Relief) was sending in supplies, and there was little way to distribute them," Goehring said. "Requests for help were coming, and there was no way to reach the places. We had a need for something centrally located in the conference."

In the first days, Tripp and others did what they could to deliver supplies, often finding they could not travel more than a few miles. As days passed and the water receded, they traveled farther, and they decided it was time to arrange a location where they could base a full-scale recovery effort.

Up to this point, the conference had been using warehouse space in Goldsboro to store supplies but, when the building was sold, they discovered the space they were using would no longer be available at no cost. Instead of paying rent, they decided to buy their own warehouse.

But where?

"We looked at a dozen warehouses," Tripp said.

# God's helping hands taking action: 10 years of offering **MERCI**



See "A place of hope," page 8



## A place of hope from page 7

Among them was what is now the Marion Edwards Recovery Center Initiatives (MERC I) site but "it was too big and too expensive." The warehouse was 39,000 square feet in size with a second warehouse measuring in at 6,000 square feet. The location—a 22-acre site on Community Drive in the Rosewood community—was in the geographical center of the NC Conference's 56-county region.

The owner was asking for \$750,000, but the conference board of trustees had set a limit of \$450,000. It appeared this was not the site they were meant to have, but... "The Realtor said for us to make the owner an offer," Mrs. Tripp said. "We offered \$290,000 and received a counter offer of \$325,000. We grabbed it, even though it was more than we needed."

The size of the building and land no longer seemed to be a problem, she continued. "We could stand in that empty warehouse and see the potential."

Over the past few years, three classrooms have been built where training sessions are held, said Ann Huffman, volunteer coordinator and case-work supervisor for MERC I. A warehouse office has been added, as has a kitchen. "Sometimes we have crowds," Huffman said. "We need a place to cook for them." Initially the smaller warehouse had five rooms. "Then we put in an extra office in the conference room," she said.

The expansion didn't end there. Hundreds of volunteers traveled from across the state and country to attend training sessions and work on mission projects, and they needed somewhere to stay. Three trailers that had been used in different towns during Floyd were brought to the MERC I site and used for sleeping space.

The trailers—named Matthew, Mark and Luke—each have four bedrooms that can accommodate up to 16 people. They also have two rest rooms, and a kitchen and dining area.

From the beginning, part of the plan for MERC I was long-term recovery, Mrs. Huffman said. Thus, housing had to be considered.

Not only were the trailers brought in, but arrangements were made for the Nomads on Mission Active in Divine Service (NOMADS), a group of volunteers who travel to projects in their recreational vehicles, to live for awhile and do missionary work at MERC I. RV hookups were provided.

With the site's development has come additional programs. Over the past 10 years, MERC I has played roles in mission work that has ranged from helping people in its own community to across the world. Homes have been repaired, school supplies have been provided to the needy, and the poor have been fed. Volunteers of all ages have found their lives enriched as they have served Christ by serving others.

MERC I's importance was and remains twofold, Huffman said. First, "this is the opportunity to be in mission work locally and worldwide." Second, "as Christians, Rick Warren was right when he said you were made for missions. Everyone is made with something they can do. They're never really satisfied with Christianity until they find it and do it," said Huffman.

\* Winkie Lee is a freelance writer who lives in Goldsboro.

## Many hands reach out

It's not just the United Methodists who use MERC I for mission work. Here are other denominations and organizations that have found the center useful:

African Methodist Episcopal Church  
Assemblies of God  
Baptist Church  
Boy Scouts of America  
Boys & Girls Club  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
Christian Reformed Church -  
World Relief Committee  
Colleges and universities  
Corporations  
Episcopal Church, USA  
Girl Scouts of America  
Habitat for Humanity  
Indian Mission Conference  
InterVarsity Christian Fellowship  
Kiwanis International  
Lutheran Disaster Response

Mennonite Disaster Services  
Moravian Church in North America  
NC Dept. of Crime Control and  
Public Safety - Emergency Management  
NC Dept. of Public Instruction  
NC Interfaith Disaster Response  
NC United Methodist Volunteers in Mission  
NC Volunteer Organizations  
Active in Disaster  
Non-denominational groups  
Original Free Will Baptist Church  
Presbyterian Church, USA  
Roman Catholic Church  
The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)  
United Church of Christ  
United Methodist Committee on Relief  
United States Military

## Dedicated to response

When it was time to decide whether to purchase property on Community Drive, one of the biggest supporters was Bishop Marion Edwards, recalled the Rev. Carol Goehring, executive director of connectional ministries for the North Carolina Conference.

Edwards wanted to be sure that, the next time a disaster struck, the Conference would be ready.

For the first couple of years, the center was called the Disaster Recovery Ministries, but it was determined a name change was appropriate. Chosen was MERC I: the Marion Edwards Recovery Center Initiatives.

"I was certainly honored and humbled," the retired bishop said during a telephone interview from his home in Hamilton, Ga. He also believed that many others deserved to be recognized as well. So many people had played – and continue to play – important roles when needs arise.

Bishop Edwards had a connection with MERC I from its beginning until his retirement in 2004. He said a

center was needed where people were prepared to immediately work in unison whenever a natural disaster struck.

"The MERC I Center became a clearing house for processing and handling resources we needed to handle the multi-faceted needs of the Conference and beyond," he said. "It was serving as a resource for the larger church (the United Methodist connection around the country) in storing, supplying and shipping."

MERC I provided Christians with the opportunity to respond to human need, suffering and loss.

"We need to remember that, in the days of Floyd, Fran and others in between, we were the object and subject of national response," he said. "People would send money, people and teams. It was the MERC I center that was the source for processing, training and deploying people."

— By Winkie Lee



Bishop Marion Edwards cuts the ribbon at the MERC I Center dedication.





# MERCI hosts joint project to send aid to the Afghani people

By Heather Stanton \*

**The Mission:** to help stop hunger for the people of Afghanistan and to keep them warm throughout the winter.

**The People:** approximately 200 volunteers from Seymour Johnson Air Force Base and the Goldsboro communities.

The Seymour Johnson and Goldsboro communities gathered Oct. 24 at the MERCI Mission Center in Goldsboro to prepare more than 115,000 rice- and soy-based meals and thousands of pounds of winter clothing for shipment to Afghanistan.

The idea for this mission developed between the Rev. Billy Olsen, pastor of Pine Forest UMC, and the Seymour Johnson chaplains as a way to bring together members of the base and local community. With the help of the MERCI Mission Center and Stop Hunger Now, an international hunger relief organization, the mission became a reality.

"Our hope is that the food and clothing will send a message to the Afghani people that America is not going to give up and abandon them," Olsen said.

This was not the first event the community supported to help the people of Afghanistan.

"The first event in March served (sent food) to two different refugee camps outside of Kabul (Afghanistan)," Olson said. This time, clothing was added to the mission to involve more people.

Many volunteers who helped during the March event came back to support the mission a second time. "I volunteered for the previous event in March, and it was a success," said Airman 1st Class Rhodora Santos, 4th Fighter Wing command section knowledge operations manager.

"We were able to package great amounts of food in such a short period of time. When I saw they were doing the packing event again, I knew I wanted to help out. I liked that they were sending not only food this time around, but clothing also to people who really need it," said Santos.

After preparing the food and clothing for shipment, the Denton Program will be put to use and the items will be sent to Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, via military transport.

The Denton Program allows private U.S. citizens and organizations to use space available on U.S. military cargo planes to transport humanitarian goods, such as clothing, food, medical and educational supplies, and agricultural equipment and vehicles, to countries in need, according to the U.S. Aid Web site, [www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov).

Once in country, U.S. military personnel secure and transport the food and clothing to Trust in Education in Kabul, who will distribute the items to those in need. "Trust in Education is a U.S. non-profit organization, helping to establish and build schools in Afghanistan," Olsen said. "Trust in Education already has established credibility with local Afghan government personnel, which should help clear the way for the food and clothing to be distributed."

Though a date has not been set, there are already plans in progress for another large-scale



ABOVE: Beth Teegarden and her husband, Capt. Conor Teegarden, 333rd Fighter Squadron weapon system officer, package winter clothing into large bags headed to Afghanistan. (U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. Heather Stanton)

BELOW: Approximately 200 people gathered for the Stop Hunger Now event at the MERCI Mission Center in Goldsboro. The second such event held in 2009, the project is a collaboration Seymour Johnson chaplains and the Rev. Billy Olsen, Pine Forest UMC, as a way to bring together members of the base and local community.



packing event for spring 2010, according to Chaplain (Maj.) Randall Jamieson, 4th FW senior Protestant chaplain. This time, plans are being made to collect food, clothes and medical supplies to meet the continual needs of the Afghani people.

"This event served as an opportunity for the base and community to touch the hearts and minds of the Afghan people and to promote peace to those who are affected by war in this region of the world," said Chaplain (Capt.) Antonio Rigonan, 4th FW Catholic chaplain.

\* Staff Sgt. Heather Stanton serves in the 4th Fighter Wing public affairs department. Story reprinted with permission from <http://www.seymourjohnson.af.mil/news/>.

## MERCI offering CDL training

NC law requires that any driver of a single vehicle, or combination of vehicles designed to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver, to have a commercial driver's license (CDL). Beginning in first quarter 2010, MERCI will offer a program to train and certify drivers to fully comply with state laws. The process for obtaining a commercial license is detailed in a PDF available from <http://nccumc.org/van-bus-drivers-breaking-the-law/>. For more information on the program and upcoming training sessions, send an email to [merci@nccumc.org](mailto:merci@nccumc.org).

## Subscribe to new e-newsletter

MERCI has started a monthly email newsletter that includes information about upcoming events. To subscribe, visit [http://listserv.nccumc.org/mailman/listinfo/merci\\_update](http://listserv.nccumc.org/mailman/listinfo/merci_update) and complete the subscription form.



# MERCI Center helping people...

By Winkie Lee \*

Over the past 10 years, MERCI has helped many programs in a variety of ways. Whether it is through offering a place to store, pack and ship items, or a place where people can live while doing mission projects, MERCI is helping Christians do what they can to help those in need. People in need benefit. So do the volunteers. Here are three of their stories:



Every summer, MERCI coordinates youth mission teams doing home repair work through the Footprints program.



Sorting crayons for school supply kits.

## Operation Textbook

For Jim Perry, volunteering for Operation Textbook is about more than giving children in kindergarten through fifth grade a better education. It's about teaching them to be self-reliant.

Perry lives in Raleigh and has made trips to Liberia since 1997. He has gone to MERCI with fellow volunteers to pack and ship donated textbooks and said that one of the challenges faced by the educational system in Liberia is a serious lack of supplies. Before the arrival of the textbooks, the only notes instructors had to use were the ones they took when they were students, he said.

The organization was recently at MERCI loading John Deere pallet boxes with books. After reinforcing the bottom skid, they filled the boxes, added another riser and filled some more. By the time they were finished, they had 4,400 pounds of textbooks and other supplies ready to go.

"Since the project has started, we have shipped 16 containers," he said.

To further students' self reliance, Operation Textbook not only donates books, but has participated with the Five Schools Development Program to hire an experienced teacher to go to different schools and show instructors how to use

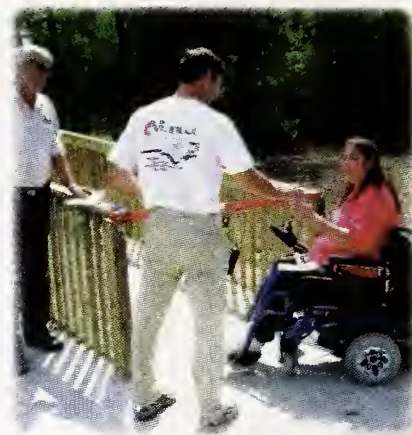
the textbooks and develop their lesson plans.

An agriculturalist is also being hired to teach fourth and fifth graders and to work with students in grades K through five on a school farm. There they are introduced to such subjects as trickle irrigation, beekeeping and setting up a nursery.

## ZOE Ministry

Ask the Rev. Greg Jenks his favorite stories of ZOE Ministry, which helps orphans in Africa, and, like the stories of Operation Textbook, he'll tell you about teaching self-reliance. Hungry children who were forced to beg for food receive training from ZOE. Those children can then feed themselves and others with the food learned to grow.

Among those supporting ZOE's



A MERCI project is completed when the homeowner receives keys to her new home.

work is MERCI, which has provided the ministry with a place from which it can store and ship medical and school supplies.

"Though ZOE is becoming a national ministry, it is centered in North Carolina," Jenks said. Having an in-state location to ship from when needed is helpful.

# ...People helping MERCI

When volunteer Robbie Johndrow of Syracuse, N.Y., looked into the sewing room at MERCI, she realized that she and her fellow volunteers had a lot of work ahead of them.

Johndrow and her husband, Ted, travel as part of the NOMADS program, or "NOMADS On a Mission Active in Divine Service."

Sponsored by The United Methodist Church, the NOMADS are people with recreational vehicles, time to travel for 3-week assignments, and a willingness to spend 20-25 hours per week on a project. Learn more at <http://www.nomadsumc.org/>.

NOMADS share their time and skills in Christian service at United Methodist-related missions agencies, camps, churches, and also in disaster response. Where the volunteers go and what they do is based on where the need is, Mrs. Johndrow said.

While at MERCI, the volunteers were focused on organizing the sewing room. The fabrics, buttons and other materials were used to make bags, clothes and a variety of items needed for various projects. Finding the right ones for the right jobs would be challenging. They needed to be organized...and not in that particular room.

One evening, Johndrow, MERCI staff member Ann Huffman, and some other volunteers were talking. Johndrow became curious about a closed door nearby, and she wanted to know where it led. Opening it, the volunteers saw several computers that had been stacked out of view after completion of an earlier project. Did they need to stay in that particu-

lar room she asked? When she heard "no," the planning began.

By the time Johndrow and her husband left for to their next location and project, the computer room was transformed into a neatly arranged sewing area.

The Johndrows both grew up on farms and work was an important part of their lives. They didn't want retirement to end that. "We wanted to do something worthwhile and use our life experiences," she said.

So, the couple packs up their 40-foot RV and goes where they are needed, enjoying the trips and the opportunities to help others.

\* Winkie Lee is a freelance writer who lives in Goldsboro.



Robbie Johndrow



Ted Johndrow

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# Church leaders seek consensus on plans for change

By Kathy L. Gilbert \*

For the past 40 years the one “voice” that has spoken for The United Methodist Church has been a 10-day, 1,000-delegate meeting charged with considering mountains of legislation...every four years.

“At times it seems that General Conference is the absent parent of a dysfunctional family,” said Bishop John Hopkins, chair of the Connectional Table.

Between sessions of the General Conference, the policy-making body of the church, there is no mechanism to step in and make quick decisions, stop the “squabbles” and get the church back on track with its mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ, he said.

Finding consensus on a solution, however, has also been difficult. In the past five years, church leaders have formed at least three different bodies, the Connectional Table, the Worldwide Nature of the Church study committee and a Call to Action study committee – to promote collaboration and nimble action during the years between General Conferences. The Council of Bishops and Connectional Table this month approved a plan calling for outside consultants also to weigh in on the church’s future.

## ‘A lot of ferment’

Committees seem to beget committees. Are they listening to each other?

The 2004 General Conference formed the Connectional Table as a roundtable of leaders who could talk about the vision and ministry of the church, Hopkins said. The group was given responsibility for coordinating

the mission, ministries and resources of The United Methodist Church.

The 2008 General Conference created the Worldwide Nature of the Church study committee, with Bishop Scott Jones, chair, after the denomination made a step toward reorganizing so it does not appear to be a U.S. church, with satellite locations in Africa, Asia and Europe.

Then in 2009, the Council of Bishops formed the Call to Action committee to make a fresh assessment of the church’s life, to help make the denomination more effective and accountable, particularly in light of the economic climate.

During a report to the Council of Bishops, the Call to Action committee, Bishop Larry Goodpaster, chair, recommended forming a new committee to continue their work. The proposal prompted the question “How is this not just another layer on top of everything else?”

Bishops Hopkins, Jones, Goodpaster, and Gregory Palmer, president of the Council of Bishops, shared the dreams of each group to revive the denomination. All four bishops agreed there is a renewed sense of urgency about the mission of the church and how to realign resources to accomplish that mission.

“I think we’re in a process of trying to practice collaboration in such a way that it becomes a habit. ... And I mean a positive habit,” Palmer said. “Collaboration is really, to put it in Wesleyan terms, a form of conferencing.”

The 60-member Connectional Table includes representatives from the five ethnic caucuses, 13 general agencies, 21 jurisdictions and seven central (outside of the U.S.) conferences, one youth, one young adult and a bishop who acts as chair.

“Real-time” conversations go on around that table when different parts of the church need to be in collaboration. The four areas of focus adopted by the 2008 General Conference were developed at that table. The four areas—developing leaders, starting new congregations, eliminating poverty and global health—show the church can rally around good ideas, he said.

Unity of the church is “absolutely important,” said Jones. “The unity rests in our doctrine, discipline and mission.”

## Declining numbers

There are currently about 8 million United Methodists in the US and more than 3 million in Africa, Asia and Europe. In 1968, membership in the US was more than 10 million.

“Far too many of our local churches have become clubs for the benefits of their members,” Jones said. “In broad regions of the church you can presume that half received no profession of faith in a given year. Mr. (John) Wesley is rolling in his grave.”

It’s not just professions of faith that are not happening, Goodpaster said. “In the 1950s we were baptizing over 400,000 people a year. Now it’s less than 150,000.”

“There are many leaders in the

church who believe when they’ve held a meeting they’ve done real work,” Jones said. “The fact that the Council of Bishops doesn’t even hold itself accountable for membership and worship attendance trends in the U.S. churches is a sign that we don’t really focus on that much.”

## Where’s Jesus?

The institution sometimes becomes the focus instead of the mission of Jesus in the world, Palmer said. “It’s almost like we’ve left Jesus.” Numbers don’t tell everything, he said, but they are not irrelevant.

“The numbers have been telling us something for a long time. We’ve been sort of happy just floating along—the institution was running, money was coming in. Then numbers were going down. Now we have a tipping point. Money’s not coming in anymore.

“Isn’t that interesting? We didn’t pay attention to the numbers of decline, professions of faith, baptisms, people in Sunday school, etc. But we pay attention to the numbers about dollars.”

*\* Kathy Gilbert is a UM News Service news writer based in Nashville, Tenn. Rick Peck, a freelance writer in Nashville, Tenn., contributed to this report.*

## conference CALENDAR

### December

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 6 World AIDS Day                                   | 9 Youth Service Fund Task Force and Conference Council on Youth Ministries Meetings |
| 10 Conference Connectional Table, 10am UM Building |   |
| 17 Advocate Advisory Committee, 2pm, UM Building   | 17 Human Relations Sunday (Church-wide special offering)                            |
| 24-25 UM Building closed                           | 18 Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Day (UMB closed)                             |
|  | 27 Older Adult Ministries Committee Meeting, 10:00am, UMB                           |

### January

- |   |
|---|
| 1 UM Building Closed                          |
| 3 AGAPE Sunday                                |
| 5-7 UMW Officers Retreat<br>Morehead City, NC |

NC Conference events are online  
at [www.nccumc.org/calendar](http://www.nccumc.org/calendar)

## BIRTH

Mary Clare Thomas Owens, daughter of Ginger Thomas and Roger Owens (DU: Duke Memorial, co-pastors) was born Sunday afternoon, October 25.

## DEATHS

WILLIAMS, Richard J. (Deacon in Full Connection, Goldsboro District: Centenary UMC) died on Nov. 2. A service of Death and Resurrection was offered at Centenary UMC in Smithfield on Nov. 7.

RUSSELL, Alta Stone, widow of the Rev. Leon Russell, died Nov. 6. She was 106 years old. Services were held at the Memorial Chapel, Lake Junaluska on Nov. 15.

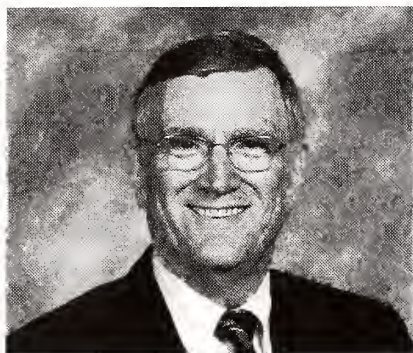
MELVIN, Benjamin Ray “Benny” (Fayetteville District: Retired) died Nov. 15. The funeral was held Nov. 18 at Culbreth Memorial UMC.

YELVERTON, P. C. (Goldsboro District: Retired) died Nov. 16. A service of Death and Resurrection was scheduled for Nov. 18 at Fremont UMC.

LOONEY, Patrick, former associate pastor of Millbrook UMC (1994-1998), and Jenkins Memorial UMC (1998-99) died Nov. 17. The funeral service was held Nov. 20 in Greensboro.

BOND, Hugh Lawrence (Larry) Bond, died Nov. 17 in Boone. He served the North Carolina Conference at one time as a professor at NC Wesleyan College. A funeral service was held Nov. 22 in Linville Falls.





By F. Belton Joyner, Jr.

## January

# adult BIBLE STUDY

Based on the scripture lessons of Cokesbury's Adult Bible Studies series.

## January 3, 2010

**Text: Matthew 3:1-6, 11-17**  
**"Proclaimed in Baptism"**

Although it is just a coincidence of the calendar, I like the idea of this focus on baptism just as the new year begins. Baptism is an initiation into something new: not a bad thought for early January! Of course, it is hard to let go of the old.

On one level, it is a matter of habits we cannot set aside. (After all, when I typed the date at the top of this article, I first typed "2009", just as I have been doing for twelve months!)

On another level, it is hard to let go of the old because we do not always know where the new will lead. When Jesus Christ claims us as his own, he does not provide a video of the future.

Even so, United Methodists do not re-baptize. In fact, in *The Book of Discipline 2008*, there are just seven items labeled "unauthorized conduct."

One of those is paragraph 341.7: "No pastor shall re-baptize. The practice of re-baptism does not conform with God's action in baptism and is not consistent with Wesleyan tradition and the historic teaching of the church. Therefore, the pastor should counsel any person seeking re-baptism to participate in a rite of re-affirmation of baptismal vows."

The practice of baptism did not begin with John the Baptist. In ancient Israel, there was washing to achieve ritual purity. In later times, persons who converted to Judaism were immersed, a symbolic washing to make one clean of unrighteous-

ness. Then, there is the baptism offered by John, for those who repent of their sins. John's baptism was an active baptism, that is, John baptized the other person. Previously, self-baptism was quite common.

In light of all of this, no wonder that Christians are often confused about the meaning of the baptism of Jesus by John (Matthew 3:13-16). Cleansings? Ignatius said that Jesus was baptized not to be cleansed, but to cleanse the water! Repentance? Jesus did not need to repent, but perhaps he is identifying himself with humanity who does.

All of these ingredients merge in the Church's practice of baptism: cleansed of our sin, initiation into the community, putting on the death and resurrection of Jesus—these are all things that God does for us.

Baptism therefore now is understood to be about the action of God. Remembering God's activity on our behalf is a good way to begin the new year!

### What Someone Else Has Said:

Paul Chilcote (*Praying in the Wesleyan Spirit*, Upper Room Books) has paraphrased John Wesley's sermon "New Birth": We need the sign-act of your love in baptism, which proclaims your love for each of us unconditionally. And we need for you to re-create us in the image of Christ—your image of love."

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Thankful for my baptism..."

## January 10, 2010

**Text: Matthew 4:1-11**  
**"Strengthened in Temptation"**

This week's study of the temptations of Jesus brings to mind a

sermon preached by Fred Craddock. Dr. Craddock says that we might well plead with Jesus to accept the devil's offer.

"Jesus, there are hungry children. Say 'Yes' and make bread out of all these rocks, and the hungry children can be fed!" And Jesus said, "No."

"Jesus, haven't you seen the homeless men scavenging for food from the dumpster; make bread out of these stones and let those men have something to eat!" And Jesus said, "No."

"Jesus, think of the starvation in the Sudan; think of the empty stomachs and swollen bellies. You can do it! You can do something about it! Turn these stones into bread!" And Jesus said, "No."

It's not that Jesus cannot do it. After all, later he feeds thousands (Matthew 14:19-21). Jesus refuses to do the right thing for the wrong reason. The devil is trying to redefine the mission of the Son of God. Jesus will not bite at that temptation.

Just because it is right most of the time does not mean that it is right all of the time. (Maybe that is a clue from Jesus about living in a gray world. Decisions are not always black and white!)

Temptation usually comes at the point of our strength. Jesus is tempted to do things he can do. In that sense, temptation is not a sign of weakness, but a sign of strength. The word translated "tempted" (Matthew 4:1) is the same word used for determining just how pure a piece of gold might be (assaying). Dare we say that temptation is a way to determine just what we are made of?

The tempter and Jesus both quote Scripture (4:1, 6, 7, 10). It almost sounds like an old fashioned Bible drill. Truth to tell, the ability to quote Scripture is no great feat. John Wesley cautioned that readers of

the Bible should read within context and read within the larger pattern of God's Word.

The account begins and ends with support for Jesus: the Spirit is with him (4:1) and the angels come to minister to him (4:11). That is almost like two book-ends reminding us that we are not alone in times of testing, times of travail, times of temptation. God is present.

### What Someone Else Has Said:

Dennis de Rougemont (*The Devil's Share*, Meridian Books) notes "Eve was not tempted by an evil thing, but by a very fine and good apple, pleasant to the eyes and precious to the spirit. She was not tempted by the desire to harm, but by the idea of achieving divinity, which on the whole appears to be an excellent idea. Unhappily, for some literally fundamental reason God did not like this idea and excluded it from his reality."

### Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Stay with me, Lord..."

## January 17, 2010

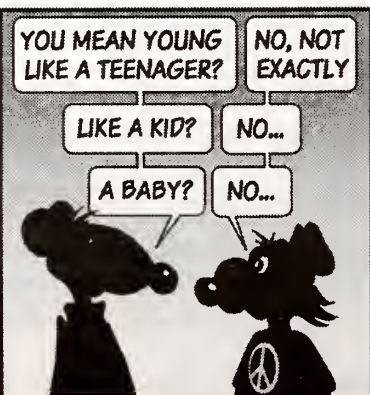
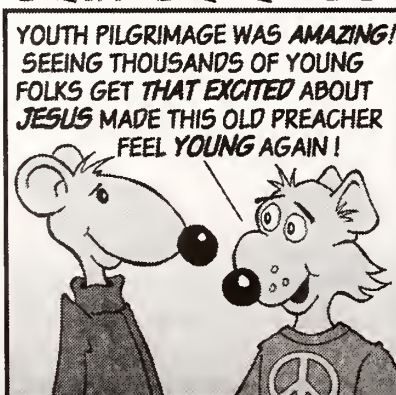
**Text: Matthew 9:27-34; 11:2-6**  
**"Demonstrated in Acts of Healing"**

This week's study texts give us lots of places for reflection and puzzlement. Why does Matthew say there were two blind men and Mark says there was one (Mark 10:46-47)? What is the meaning of the phrase "Son of David" (9:27)? What is the significance of Jesus' asking the men if they believed he could heal them (9:28)? Why did Jesus instruct them "to tell no one" (9:30)? What are demons (9:32-34)?

But I want to focus on yet another question: What does Jesus mean about persons being blessed who take no offense at him? (Matthew 11:6) Does this mean that blessing from Jesus comes simply by the rather mild standard of not being offended by what Jesus has done?

For starters, the word translated "offense" is skandalōn. Our English word "scandal" jumps out from that Greek word. Scholars of language suggest that skandalōn probably is rooted in a word that means, of all things, "a bent sapling." The image

## Church Mice



Karl Zorowski

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See "Bible Study," page 13



# January adult Bible study *continued from page 12*

that comes to mind is walking in the woods and stumbling over a fallen branch or being swacked (Swacked? Is there such a word!) up beside the head with a low hanging branch.

"Scandal" has the sense of "stumbling block" or "being enticed to do something wrong or unpleasant."

Various translators have taken a stab at getting the meaning of who is blessed: Weymouth says "takes no offense at my claims." *The New English Bible* reads "who does not find me a stumbling block." Lamsa's *New Testament according to the Eastern Texts* renders the phrase "who does not stumble on account of me."

J. B. Phillips' paraphrase says "never loses his faith in me." Eugene Peterson in *The Message* offers "(if) this is what you were expecting." *The English Version for the Deaf* says "who can accept me."

The Good News Bible suggests "those who have no doubts about me." *The Jerusalem Bible* translates "does not lose faith in me."

*Contemporary English Version* gives "who doesn't reject me because of what I do." *The Revised English Bible* says "those who do not find me an obstacle to faith."

What are we to do with such an array of understandings of our Lord? I take it to mean that we are blessed if we can keep on walking with Jesus even when it is on a path we might not choose and even when we do not grasp fully his presence. And, maybe even if we get swacked!

## What Someone Else Has Said:

In *On Being a Christian* (Double-day), Hans Küng wrote: "What is new and unique about Jesus is the whole in its unity; it is this Jesus himself in his work."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Open my heart, Lord..."

## January 24, 2010

**Text: Matthew 11:25-30**  
**"Declared in Prayer"**

Most Christian traditions baptize babies. (That might be hard to believe for those of us who live in a predominantly Baptist culture, but remember the Roman Catholics, the Orthodox, the Anglicans, the Lutherans, the Reformed, and the Wesleyans who make up large chunks of Christendom.)

When an infant is baptized, the child does not understand what is going on; the child cannot articulate

the meaning of the occasion; the child does not deserve any particular acts of grace; the child stores no memory of what has happened.

Why bother?

In this week's lesson, we get a hint: Matthew 11:25. God's gift of revelation does not depend on understanding, articulation, deserving, or memory. It is just that: a gift. God has "revealed them to infants" (Matthew 11:25).

Jesus is not talking so much about infants in age as he is speaking of infants in understanding, articulation, deserving, and memory. (Infants in age become a sign of how God gives grace to us.) By way of contrast, Jesus says the revelation is not to the wise (the Greek word means one who has many practical skills) or to the intelligent (the Greek word means mental acumen).

In our language today, we'd say the revelation is not to the one who has street smarts or the one who has book learning.

In other words, the revelation is not to those who think they can figure it out on their own, either by practical understanding or by intellectual gymnastics.

In fact, the New Testament word for "revealed" in Matthew 11:25 literally means "to take off the cover." And guess who takes off the cover! God takes off the cover!

Picture a baby trying to take the lid off a jar of Gerber's. It won't happen. The food is available only when someone else removes the lid. The revelation is done by God, not by us!

These verses (Matthew 11:25-30) close out with an invitation from Jesus for us to accept the gifts of that revelation: "Come to me, all you that are weary and carrying heavy burdens..."

John Wesley taught that by the gift of prevenient grace we are able to respond to that invitation, not because we have figured it out but because we have become infants again.

## What Someone Else Has Said:

In John R. Tyson's study *Assist Me to Proclaim: The Life and Hymns of Charles Wesley* (Eerdmans), the author wrote: "(Charles Wesley) was one of those people who had been baptized as infants and who had thereby the seed of the life of faith planted in them, but they had not brought it to fruition...By combining the Anglican commitment to infant baptism with the evangelical conception of justification by faith as the new birth, Wesley had begun applying the Reformation doctrine to his own life and theological context."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "O Lamb of God, I come..."

## January 31, 2010

**Text: Matthew 13:54-58**  
**"Revealed in Rejection"**

Preachers often say that one of the most difficult places to preach is one's home church, the congregation where one grew up, where one did (albeit modest) misdeeds, where folks know your folks, and where, as we sometimes say, "no secrets are hid."

That's the situation facing Jesus in this week's lesson. (In the companion passages from Luke 4:16-30, the account is even more intense; the locals want to dump Jesus off a cliff.)

Jesus had made Capernaum his base of ministry (Matthew 4:13). He has preached; he has taught; he has prayed; he has healed; he has called persons to repentance.

Now he comes back to Nazareth. I don't want to put too much significance on Matthew's passing description, but it seems important that the text says "(Jesus) came to his hometown and began to teach the people in their synagogue" (13:54).

We do tend to get possessive of our places of gathering and worship, don't we?

Is that why we sometimes have to admit that our inclusiveness has limits and our hospitality is not very radical? It is disruptive to have someone come in and do things differently. "And Jesus used to live here; he ought to know better!"

The locals were scandalized (13:57). (See the material for January 17, 2010, for some thoughts about scandal and offense.)

Our Lord had enough perspective of history to understand that he was not the first to be rejected by the home crowd (13:57).

And in the midst of that lack of faith, he did not do *many* "deeds of power." That means he did *some*! It was not as expansive a scene as it might have been, but Jesus did *some* "deeds of power" (King James Version: "mighty works").

How easily we are willing to accept just a modicum of what Jesus can do in our lives, when he can, in truth, do more, much more!

One might ask: Is my local congregation willing to settle for just a taste of the ministry and mission of our Lord when, in fact, Jesus wants to give a feast?

In Matthew's gospel account, the

writer uses two different words that get translated "honor." One means "getting praised" and the other means "having value." In Matthew 13:57 ("without honor"), the term chosen means "without value."

Jesus is saying that the prophet is "worthless" in the places where the folks have made up their minds in advance (13:54-55) as to the validity of the prophet's message.

The people at the synagogue in Nazareth did that.

How about the people in Durham, Elizabeth City, Conetoe, Wilmington, Bahama, Burgaw, and Rocky Mount?

## What Someone Else Has Said:

In *Basic United Methodist Beliefs* (ed. James Heidinger II, Bristol Books), Paul Mickey wrote "...Jesus is more than the...lovable wonder-worker...He is the Son of God."

## Prayer:

As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "O Christ, my God..."

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**ANNOUNCEMENTS**  
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## NCC, Edenton Street UMC to host national children's ministry event

A general church-sponsored Children's Ministry Forum will be hosted by Edenton Street UMC in downtown Raleigh on Feb. 23-25, 2010. Previous Forum events have been held in Georgia, Oklahoma, Florida, Texas, Alabama, and Texas. The theme for Forum 2010 is "Fill My Cup, Lord." It will provide experiences of innovative workshops, soul-refreshing worship, networking opportunities, fellowship and sharing with others involved in various aspects of children's ministries, a Cokesbury store and resource display area. Participants may register for the full event or one day options. Continuing education units are also available.

A schedule for the event, listing of workshops, registration and other information is available at the website: [www.gbod.org/cmf](http://www.gbod.org/cmf). The regular registration deadline is Jan. 31, 2010. The Conference Office of Children, Youth and Young Adult Ministries at the Methodist Building in Raleigh also has information about the Forum.

While Children's Ministry Forum is co-sponsored by the General Board of Discipleship and the Large Church Initiative, much of the content will be applicable for medium to larger church settings (average worship attendance of 350 or more). Several leaders in children's ministry from the NC Conference have attended this event in previous years and testify to the benefit of being part of this experience. Participation of conference churches is encouraged since this is the first national denominational event the conference has hosted.

## Leadership in the Small Congregation application deadline is Dec. 15

Applications are now available for the Summer Collegium, a project in support of small congregations at Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Va. Clergy (and their spouses) from 25 small churches of all Christian denominations are invited to spend nine days at Virginia Seminary for encouragement, education, rest and renewal. All expenses, including travel, books, meals, lodging, child care at home and pulpit supply, are paid by a grant from the Lilly Endowment. The theme is Leadership in the Small Congregation. The keynote speaker will be Alice Mann, a prolific writer on congregational ministry, and John Bell from the Iona Community in Scotland will join the conference worship team. The dates for the Summer Collegium are June 23 - July 1, 2010. Application forms are available at [www.vts.edu/education/collegium](http://www.vts.edu/education/collegium), or will be sent in the mail by e-mailing [SummerCollegium@vts.edu](mailto:SummerCollegium@vts.edu) or by calling 703-461-1760. Applications must be postmarked by Dec. 15, 2009 to be considered.

## Faith and Health Summit

The Council's Partners in Health and Wholeness (PHW) Program will hold its 2010 Faith and Health Summit on Tuesday, March 23 at Raleigh's First Baptist Church (on Wilmington Street) from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The program will begin with a keynote address by Gary Gunderson, one of the nation's leading experts on issues of faith and health, and include informative sessions on a variety of health topics. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend this critical gathering of congregants, faith leaders and health professionals from across the state! More details, such as instructions for registration and an agenda, will be provided at a later date.

## Workshop on effective small membership ministry

Hinton Rural Life Center is hosting the workshop, "The Small Membership Church: Keys to Effective Ministry" featuring Ron and Bonnie Crandall and the yet-to-be named executive secretary of Rural/Urban Networks of GBGM.

This event will be Feb. 22-24, 2010. The registration fee for the three-day event is \$125 plus room and board. To see a brochure, go to [http://www.hintoncenter.org/Keys\\_Workshop\\_Brochure.pdf](http://www.hintoncenter.org/Keys_Workshop_Brochure.pdf).

## Summer camp registration is open

Online summer camp registration for Chestnut Ridge, Don Lee and Rockfish is now open. Camping opportunities include residential camps, day camps, family camps, adventure camps and more. For detailed descriptions of the variety of options, visit [www.campchestnutridge.org](http://www.campchestnutridge.org), [www.donleecenter.org](http://www.donleecenter.org), and [www.camprockfish.org](http://www.camprockfish.org).

## UMCOR newsletter available on immigration education

"First Monday" is a monthly internet newsletter that offers valuable resources on the church and immigration issues in the United States. It is issued by Justice for our Neighbors (JFON), a network of free legal clinics for immigrants related to UMCOR. A typical issue of the newsletter not only covers the activities of JFON but also updates developments around immigration legislation, provides information on educational resources, and suggests ways in which congregations and church groups can gain perspective on immigration issues. For more information on First Monday, go to UMCOR - First Monday. If you would like to give to this critical ministry, please place your gift in your Sunday offering and mark it: JFON Advance # 901285 or to give on-line, please go to JFON Advance #901285.

## Church and Society ethnic local church, human relations grants

Jan. 10 is the deadline to apply for two grants offered by the United Methodist General Board of Church & Society (GBCS) — for Ethnic Local Church Grants and for Human Relations Day Grants. For more information about these opportunities, visit [www.umc-gbcs.org](http://www.umc-gbcs.org) and select the Leadership Development / GBGS Grants option from the menu.

The ethnic local church program seek to strengthen ethnic minority local churches through education, advocacy or leadership training and development as they engage in social justice. For more information, go to GBGS Ethnic Local Church Grants.

Human Relations Day Grants are to support ministries that respond to non-violent young offenders through education, advocacy or leadership training and development. Grant funds are raised through The United Methodist Church's Human Relations Day Special Sunday each year. Human Relations Day Sunday is Jan. 17.

## Two types of grants available for Older Adult Ministry

The United Methodist Committee on Older Adult Ministries is providing two kinds of grants: Intergenerational Ministry grants and Caregiving Ministry grants during the 2009-2012 quadrennium. These grants, part of the Comprehensive Plan for Older Adult Ministries, are available to local United Methodist congregations, districts, annual conferences, central conferences, and United Methodist-related institutions. Applications will be reviewed and recipients selected by the UM Committee on Older Adult Ministries. The following procedures and timelines have been determined by the committee:

### Intergenerational Ministry with older adults

- ♦ Jan. 15, 2010 – Submission deadline. Applications available, both in print form and on the website [www.aging-umc.org](http://www.aging-umc.org).
- ♦ Fall 2010 – Grant funds are awarded.

### Caregiving Ministry with older adults

- ♦ August 2010 – Applications available, both in print form and on the website [www.aging-umc.org](http://www.aging-umc.org).
  - ♦ Jan. 15, 2011 – Submission deadline. Fall 2011 – Grant funds awarded.
- For more information or to request printed applications, contact:

Center on Aging & Older Adult Ministries—GBOD, PO Box 340003 — Nashville, TN 37203-0003. Telephone: 615-340-7177 or Toll free: 1-877-899-2780 ext. 7177. Email: [tkline@gbod.org](mailto:tkline@gbod.org) Website: [www.aging-umc.org](http://www.aging-umc.org)



# around the CONFERENCE



## Person Street UMC, Fayetteville - Martha's Table serves community

Person Street UMC in downtown Fayetteville is small - averaging 35 in worship - but they are reaching out to the needy in big ways with twice monthly "soup kitchens" which they call Martha's Table (after Martha, the ultimate New Testament hostess). Usually, approximately 65 people are fed. There is also a plan for a dinner on Thanksgiving Day. Start-up funds came from the Conference Missions Office but Martha's Table relies mostly on volunteers and donations. Hay Street UMC is a partner church in this outreach. Shown above are some of the volunteers in blue "Person Street UMC" aprons and a few of the "guests."



## Zebulon UMC - ZUM Kids afterschool program offered weekly

The ZUM Kids Afterschool Program was designed to meet the needs of afterschool care for the community in a caring, Christian environment. The program runs from 1:30-5:00 pm every Wednesday during the traditional school calendar year. There is no charge to participate in this program and is run by church staff, volunteers and youth.

Each Wednesday, the church van picks up children (kindergarten through fifth grades) from different schools in the area and transports them back to Zebulon United Methodist Church. Once at the church the ZUM Kids participate in homework/tutoring time, and interactive Bible lesson, games, snack time and recess. During different times of the year, they also take part in craft projects and small performances.



### Give the gift of knowledge!

Advocate subscriptions make a great Christmas gift. Details at <http://nccumc.org/advocate/>



R-L: Bishop Al Gwinn and Durham District Superintendent, Gray Southern, traveled to Cokesbury's celebration in a horse-drawn chariot.

## Cokesbury UMC celebrates 225th anniversary and homecoming

Cokesbury UMC in Henderson commemorated its 225th anniversary and annual homecoming celebration August 15-16. The festivities began August 15 with an ice cream social, followed by a musical presentation featuring the Cokesbury Quartet and Cokesbury's choir. The festivities continued on August 16 with a special worship service led by Bishop Al Gwinn and a covered dish luncheon.

All former members, families, and friends were invited to the anniversary celebration. Attendees were encouraged to dress in Colonial period clothing.

Cokesbury was named after bishops Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury, who came to the United States from England in the early 1780's to aid in the spread of Methodism. Over a span of 225, 71 pastors have served Cokesbury.

In 1784, Cokesbury's first church was built of logs at the present cemetery site. However, the log church was soon torn down and a new building was erected. On Dec. 25, 1925, the third church building burned to the ground. For ten months, worship services were held in the Cokesbury School Building.

The present and fourth church building was completed and dedicated in October, 1926. The east wing was added in 1954 and the educational wing in 1964. In 1971, the sanctuary was renovated to include a pulpit with a choir loft and a narthex.

In 1984, Cokesbury held its bicentennial celebration. To commemorate the 200th anniversary, Cokesbury raised and dedicated a steeple. That afternoon lunch was served under a brush arbor, a tradition dating back to the 100th anniversary celebration in 1884.

In 2001, Cokesbury met its goal of

becoming a station church with a full-time pastor and furnished parsonage. The Rev. Michael E. Rocheleau and family were the first residents.

In 2005, Cokesbury added the west wing. The Rev. Matt Evans reminded the congregation that anything can be done when one puts trust in God's hands, since the building project took only 18 months to complete. Evans received the Denman Evangelism Award for his enthusiasm in reaching and involving people in the church and community.

The current pastor, the Rev. Barry Stallings came in 2006. Stallings has instituted several programs for the church and community, including the establishment of Cokesbury's food pantry, Martha's Ministry, and the church website. In July 2009, Stallings completed the five-year course of study for ordained ministry at Duke Divinity School.

Rev. Stallings invited everyone to relish in the history of the church by attending the 225th celebration.

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Celebrating its 16th year of reaching youth in the NC Conference, Pilgrimage – was held Nov. 13 -15 at the Crown Coliseum in Fayetteville. Event attendance was just under 6,100. There were 285 churches represented from all 12 districts in the NC Conference. (Photos by Derek Leek)

By Sue Ellen Nicholson \*

The Conference Council on Youth Ministries-sponsored event for local church youth groups – Pilgrimage – was held Nov. 13 -15 at the Crown Coliseum in Fayetteville. The attendance of just under 6100 was one of the largest in the event's 16-year

history. There were 285 churches represented from all 12 districts in the NC Conference.

The Rev. Ruben Saenz, pastor of El Buen UMC in Edinburg, TX, was the speaker for the weekend. The Rev. Adam Seate of St Luke UMC-Goldsboro and Jay Locklear from St Luke UMC-Sanford served as the lead

musicians, working with a house band of youth from across the NC Conference. Christian music artist, Nathan Tasker, provided special music during Saturday night's session.

The mission focus for Pilgrimage was meeting the needs of the hungry so the youth groups were invited to bring nonperishable canned food for the Second Harvest Food Bank of eastern North Carolina. The food donations weighed by the Food Bank totaled 1,548 pounds.

Operation Sharehouse with Stop Hunger Now was held at two locations – Methodist University and at Salem UMC in Eastover on Saturday afternoon as an option for youth groups with approximately 750 participants preparing over 40,000 meals. Some youth groups also went gleaning with the Society of St. Andrew during their Saturday afternoon break.

Many youth and youth groups from across the conference were involved in the leadership of worship at Pilgrimage. Youth providing testimonies were Aaron Bowen of First UMC-Cary, Donovan Patrick of Edenton UMC, Lisa Mazingo of Zion UMC-Mt Olive, and Ginny Hall of Fuquay-Varina UMC.

Youth groups offering acts of worship such as drama, blacklight hand mime, and liturgical dance were Mt Zion UMC-Garner, Pine Valley UMC-Wilmington, Horne Memorial UMC and Elevation UMC, Fremont UMC, First UMC-Sneads Ferry, St Francis UMC-Cary and Swansboro UMC. Youth groups providing DVD's were Effland UMC, Sharon UMC-Holden Beach and Edenton UMC.

The house band that provided music with Adam and Jay included Nicole Barone, Sarah Bergland, Kennedy Fitzsimmons, Jillian Hines, Keela Kennedy, Emily Manning, Amber June Suits, Clark Maness, Weston Heginbotham, Collier Roberts, Wes Milton, and TJ Bradish.

The Award of Excellence in Youth



"We're finally here!" Youth are excited to be at Pilgrimage. Youth groups plan and anticipate Pilgrimage for months.

Ministry was presented to Westover UMC of Raleigh during the Saturday morning session by the Conference Youth Vice-President Jillian Hines. Conference Youth Treasurer Will Farnell presented certificates of recognition for giving to Youth Service Fund to the Burlington District and local churches: Bethany UMC-Wanchese, Englewood UMC, Epworth UMC-Durham, Farmville UMC, First UMC-Morehead City, Harry Hoosier UMC, Jones Spring UMC-Norman Charge, Popular Springs UMC, Red Oak UMC, Sharon UMC-Holden Beach, St Luke UMC-Laurinburg, and St Pauls UMC-Maxton.

The theme for Pilgrimage 2009 was "Peace like a River." The theme was developed using the song stanzas: peace like a river, joy like a fountain and love like the ocean. Ingrid Hall of Orange UMC provided the stage visuals of three banners in interpretation of the theme.

Pilgrimage is intended to invite youth and adult leaders in youth ministry to a new or deeper commitment to Jesus Christ and life of faithful Christian discipleship.

Pilgrimage 2010 will be held Nov. 12-14 at the Crown Coliseum in Fayetteville with Rev. Bart Campolo as the speaker. Brochures with registration and further information will be available in late spring 2010.

\* Sue Ellen Nicholson is NC Conference director of Children, Youth and Young Adult Ministries



ABOVE: The Award of Excellence in Youth Ministry was presented to Westover UMC of Raleigh, the Rev. Johnnie Wright, pastor, during the Saturday morning session. Shown behind the youth are the three banners created by Ingrid Hall of Orange UMC to embody the "Peace like a River" theme which was developed using the song stanzas: peace like a river, joy like a fountain and love like the ocean.

BELOW: The Conference Youth Council leads in the Pilgrimage tradition—"That's What I Like About You."

















